

HPV

Genital warts are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). Over twenty types have been described. HPV usually spreads during sexual intercourse with an infected partner. Some HPV-caused lesions on the cervix are associated with an increased risk of cervical cancer.

Symptoms usually appear from three weeks to eight months after exposure. It is advisable to use condoms if there is any question of prior exposure. The visible genital warts start as small painless hard spots which appear on the bottom of the vaginal opening. Warts also occur on the labia, vulva, cervix, anus and male genitalia. Warmth and moisture encourage the growth of warts which develop a cauliflower appearance as they grow larger.

There are several treatments for genital warts: Podophyllin solution is an old standby. It must be applied only by a physician. Chemical burns of the surrounding skin must be avoided. Sometimes several treatments are necessary, and they are not always successful.

Aldara (imiquimod) cream 5% has recently come on the market from 3 M Pharmaceuticals. Often 12 - 16 weeks are required for treatment, but it can be used at home by the patient. It should not be applied to warts inside the vagina or anus. New warts may develop during therapy.

Trichloroacetic acid, cryotherapy, 5 – fluorouracil cream, surgery, electrodesiccation and laser beams are other possible treatment modalities to be handled by appropriately trained specialists.

As always, we at the University of Houston Health Center will be happy to help you find a treatment regimen tailored to your needs.



Healthfully yours,

Dr. Healthberry

For questions or comments you can;

Write "Healthberry" at
University Health Center,
100 UH Health Center,
Houston, Texas 77204-3019,

E-Mail "Healthberry" at JMGray2@central.uh.edu
Fax "Healthberry" at (713)743-5164.