



CONDYLOMA ACUMINATA Genital Warts

What is it?

Condyloma Acuminata (or genital warts) is caused by a virus called Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). They are very contagious and are usually spread by sexual contact. They can appear around the rectal opening in both men and women, on the labia (vaginal lips), vagina and cervix in women and on the penis in men. They may appear as single bumps or “tags”, as cauliflower-like clusters, or as flat, white areas. These warts usually appear three weeks to nine months after contact, but some people will never develop them or will see them years after exposure. Condyloma may be treated successfully though it often takes multiple treatments since there are no virus-specific antibiotics available.

There are many different strains of HPV. Some cause genital warts. Some, when they get into the cervix, can cause changes to the cells of the cervix that can actually lead to cervical cancer.

How is it treated?

The goal in treating warts is to reduce the number of lesions and to help your immune system fight the virus causing the warts. The best way to start treating Condyloma is with self-care. The points listed below are as important as the medical treatment offered at Center for Dermatology.

1. Keep the areas where you have warts clean and dry since the virus grows in moist, warm conditions.
2. Wear cotton underwear, loose clothing, and dry yourself with a hair dryer after you bathe (dry skin reduces the friction of rubbing).
3. For women, any vaginal infection may provide the wart virus with a good environment for growth, so it is important to follow your clinician’s directions for clearing up any infection.
4. Overall good health is crucial to fight any virus. It is very important to eat nutritious foods and drink lots of fluids, get enough sleep, exercise regularly, minimize your use of harmful chemicals (alcohol, tobacco, drugs) and try to reduce stress.
5. Condyloma is a sexually transmitted infection. Using condoms may help prevent giving the infection to your partner.
6. Have your partner be examined by a clinician experienced with HPV, even if s/he has no symptoms. This is very important.
7. Women with HPV may be at an increased risk of pre-cancerous or cancerous cell changes on the cervix. Follow the directions of your health care provider if any of your Pap smears appear abnormal.
8. Stop smoking. Smoking weakens the body’s immune system and makes it more difficult to fight off this virus as well as other illnesses. Nicotine also tends to concentrate in the cervical fluids increasing a woman’s risk of HPV affecting her cervical tissue.



Treatments Available at the Center for Dermatology

1. Podophyllin – a chemical directly applied to the wart which must be washed off in 6-8 hours
2. Cryotherapy – freezing of warts
3. Electrodesiccation – destroying warts with an electrical current
4. Laser Surgery – using a beam of light to reduce warts
5. Condylox, Aldara, Zyclara, Veregen – prescription medicines given to you for at home treatment by your physician

How Can Condyloma be Prevented?

- Limit the number of sex partners
- When beginning a new relationship, discuss Condyloma and all risks of sexually transmitted conditions **before** becoming sexually active
- Ideally, do not have intercourse while you are being treated for warts. If you do have intercourse, use a condom
- Do not have unprotected intercourse **or** oral sex with an infected partner
- Get treatment as soon as you notice any symptoms
- Keep your follow up visits
- Most importantly, **stay healthy**. Limit or eliminate the use of substances such as alcohol, cigarettes and drugs (it is especially important to avoid cigarettes).

Remember that treatment for warts can take many months. Although you are advised not to have skin-to-skin contact with the infected area, you can still be intimate with your sex partner and share physical closeness in other ways.

Information is changing about HPV, so ask us if you have heard or read other information and have questions.