

GENITAL WARTS

Precautions, prevention and when to seek specialist care

What are genital warts? Genital warts are usually caused by certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV). They may appear as small, skin-colored bumps around the genitals or anus, but some HPV infections cause no visible symptoms. A clinician can assess whether a growth is a wart or another condition.

Important precautions

- Arrange a clinical examination if you notice new bumps, itching, bleeding, or unusual changes in the genital or anal area. Do not assume every bump is an HPV wart.
- Avoid picking, scratching, shaving over, or attempting to cut off a wart; this can irritate skin and cause injury.
- Do not use ordinary pharmacy wart-removal acids or freezing products on genital skin unless a clinician specifically prescribes an appropriate treatment.
- Avoid sexual contact while visible warts are present or while treated skin is healing, and follow your clinician's advice on when to resume.
- Condoms and barriers can lower HPV transmission risk, but do not provide complete protection because HPV can affect uncovered skin.
- Consider HPV vaccination if eligible. Vaccines help prevent new infections with covered HPV types; they do not treat existing warts.
- Tell your clinician if you are pregnant, immunocompromised, or have recurring lesions, as assessment and treatment choices may differ.

Treatment and follow-up

Treatment options may include clinician-prescribed topical medicines, cryotherapy (freezing), or office-based removal. The best approach depends on the location, size, number of lesions, pregnancy status, and patient preferences. Treatment removes visible warts but does not necessarily eliminate HPV; recurrence can occur.

Ask whether screening for other sexually transmitted infections is appropriate based on your history and symptoms. HPV testing is not generally used to diagnose visible genital warts.

Seek prompt medical assessment

Seek timely care for rapidly changing or pigmented lesions, persistent bleeding, ulcers, significant pain, difficulty urinating, or a lesion whose diagnosis is uncertain.

SPECIALIST CONSULTATION

Dr. Murtuza Bandukwala

Dermatology consultation | Cosmocare Medical Center, Dubai

Dr. Murtuza Bandukwala provides dermatology consultations. A clinical assessment can help determine whether a genital lesion is a wart, discuss appropriate treatment options, and advise on follow-up and prevention. Please confirm current appointment availability and credentials directly with the clinic.

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Medical note: This handout is general educational information, not a diagnosis or substitute for an in-person medical examination. Treatment and prevention advice should be individualized.