

UROLOGICAL MEDICAL GROUP OF NORTH ORANGE COUNTY

Adult and Pediatric Urology

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VIRAL (VENEREAL) WARTS

Viral, or venereal, warts are also known as condyloma acuminatum or human papilloma virus (HPV). These genital warts are now known to be associated with cancer of the reproductive tract in women as well as some men. HPV and carcinoma of the cervix are now a well-established relationship. It is transmitted sexually or human papilloma virus (HPV). These genital warts are now known to be associated with cancer of the reproductive tract in women as well as some men. HPV and carcinoma of the cervix are now a well-established relationship. It is transmitted sexually.

Millions of Americans have HPV infection. A large portion of these people have infection that is invisible to the naked eye but which can be clearly seen after the acetic acid test is done when magnification is used. However, there are some subclinical (undetectable) cases as well. In other words, many people have the virus who do not have detectable warts.

To give you some idea of the epidemic of warts, in 1966, there were 53,500 reported first visits to doctors for condyloma. Now there are over 300,000 such visits yearly.

The cause of the warts is the virus known as HPV. The virus invades cells of the skin (usually genitals, but may involve the pharynx or throat) and causes the cells to multiply. A wart is just a thick piece of skin. Some warts are large fleshy swelling and others are barely detectable flat growths. Each has the same potential for transmission. All warts need to be treated.

Treatment consists of destroying the infected skin. This can be done in a variety of ways and your doctor will individualize the treatment to your case. Sometimes biopsy (removal of a piece of tissue) is necessary. Various techniques to destroy the skin include burning it (cautery), chemical destruction, and laser treatment. Laser is usually used in the extensive difficult cases.

Cure rates are notoriously low; recurrence is common since not all lesions can be found. Most recurrences show up within 6 months. Therefore every patient is encouraged to return at the six month point to be rechecked. Every patient should avoid oral sex for at least six months and should use a rubber condom to avoid infecting his sexual partner.

Investigative work is in process to try and cure this common disease and progress is made almost month to month. Be sure to keep your appointments so that you can benefit from the new technology that develops in treating and detecting this disease.