



August 2011

Warts

(Human Papillomavirus)

What is Warts?

Warts are non-cancerous skin growths that are typically found on hands and feet but can appear almost anywhere on the body. They are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). There are more than 50 types of warts. They typically disappear after a few months but can last for years and can recur. Warts are widespread throughout the population. They produce epithelial tumours on the skin and mucous membranes and have been closely associated with genital tract malignant diseases.

Human papillomavirus infections are most common in the 15 to 44 year age group. They are the most commonly acquired viral sexually transmitted infections. Genital warts are the most prevalent. HPV infection of the cervix gives rise to the most common cause of squamous cell abnormalities in PAP smears.

Symptoms of Warts

Type	Signs and Symptoms
Common Wart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dome-shaped, rough appearance • Commonly seen on the backs of hands, fingers; close to the nails • Common in children and young adults • Painless, but can be painful when located over weight-bearing surfaces or points of friction
Foot (Plantar) Wart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat with black dots • Found on the soles of the feet • May be painful • Common among adolescents and young adults
Filiform or Ditate Wart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A thread – or finger – like wart • Most common on the face, especially near the eyelids and lips

Information sheet

For further information, please call:
York Region Health Connection 1-800-361-5653
TTY 1-866-252-9933 or visit www.york.ca

Flat Wart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller and smoother than other warts • Flesh-coloured • Often grow in multiples; usually on the face, arms and legs
Genital Wart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May appear as small hard bumps or tiny skin tags • Often there are no symptoms but they may cause itching, pain during sex, vaginal or rectal bleeding • Some types have been linked to an increased risk of cervical cancer in women

How Warts spreads

This virus spreads through direct contact with an infected person. It is also possible to get warts from infected surfaces, such as shower floors or shared towels. Symptoms may appear anywhere from three months up to several years after contracting the infection. Genital warts are spread during unprotected sexual activity and can also be passed from mother to baby during childbirth.

Treating Warts

There are many different treatments and procedures associated with wart removal. See a doctor for treatment of warts that appear on the face, feet or genitals. Although treatment for other warts may not be necessary, it may lessen the chance of warts spreading to other areas of the body. A person may also find over-the-counter preparations to be helpful.

Preventing Warts

- Gardasil is an HPV vaccine aimed at preventing cervical cancers and genital warts
- Avoid direct contact with warts
- Wear foot protection in public showers or saunas
- Practice safe sex

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