

# HPV

HPV (human papillomavirus) is the most common STD in the United States.  
There are over 100 different types of HPV.

## Signs and Symptoms

- *Most types do not cause symptoms.*
- The types of HPV that cause cervical cancer usually cause no symptoms.
- Some strains of HPV cause genital warts. Signs of genital warts may be:
  - Soft, pink or flesh-colored bumps or swellings on or near the genitals, anus or upper thigh
  - Cauliflower-like growths on or near genitals, anus or upper thigh area
- Most people who develop warts do so within 3-6 months.

## Transmission

- Anal or vaginal sex
- Infected mother to baby at vaginal birth
- Oral sex transmission is probably rare.

## Prevention

- Abstain from oral, anal and vaginal sex
- Use condoms/barriers consistently and correctly for oral, anal or vaginal sex.
- Get regular, routine pap smear tests to prevent cervical cancer (women).
- Get regular, routine health care exams, including STD tests.
- If a partner has HPV, avoid sexual contact if warts are present and use condoms at all times.

## Treatment

- See a health care provider for exam and tests to figure out the best treatment.
- There is no cure for HPV, but warts can be removed.
- Vaccines to prevent some types of HPV are now available.

## If Not Treated

- Increased risk for cervical/penile cancer
- Can be passed to infant at delivery; may cause warts in baby's throat or voice box

## If You Have HPV

- Use condoms or barriers with vaginal and anal sex.
- Learn about HPV and seek support from local groups or web sites.
- Seek medical care, including STD tests.
- Use all medicines as prescribed.
- Notify recent sex partners that they were exposed to HPV and talk to new partners about it.
- Have yearly STD screens including a pap smear test as indicated if you are female.
- If pregnant, get tested for STDs and HIV.

For more information about STDs  
or for getting tested and treated,  
visit our web site...

[www.kingcounty.gov/health/std](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/std)

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