

# HPV



HPV (human papillomavirus) is the most common STD in the United States.  
There are over 40 different types of HPV.

HPV can infect the genital area, mouth and throat of males & females.

## 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 after getting infected.

## Transmission

- Anal or vaginal sex
- Oral sex and genital to genital contact
- Infected mother to baby at vaginal birth
- People with HIV are more likely to get HPV and related health problems.

## Prevention

- *Get vaccinated against HPV (girls, boys, young women, young men).*
- 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.

## Prevention *(continued)*

- If a partner has HPV, avoid sexual contact if warts are present and use condoms at all times.
- Limit number of sex partners.

## Treatment

- Most people with HPV control the infection without treatment.
- If you have warts or if you are a woman with an abnormal pap smear, you may need treatment.
- See a health care provider for exam and tests to figure out the best treatment.

## If Not Treated

- Increased risk for certain cancers in women & men
- Can rarely 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.
- Get 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)

Public Health  
Seattle & King County



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