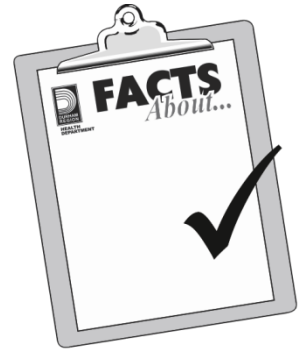




# FACTS

## About...



HEALTH DEPARTMENT



# HUMAN PAPILOMAVIRUS (HPV)

## What is it?

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections (STIs). There are more than 100 HPV types and 40 of those that specifically affect the genital area. The different types of HPV can lead to genital and anal warts as well as cancers of the cervix, vagina, vulva (area around the vagina), anus, penis, mouth and throat. In Canada, HPV types 16 and 18 cause over 70% of cervical cancers and HPV types 6 and 11 cause over 90% of genital warts.

## How is it spread?

HPV is spread easily through intimate skin to skin contact with the penis, scrotum, vagina, vulva, or anus of someone who has the virus. Touching a partner's genitals with the mouth can transmit HPV.

## What do I look for?

Many people who have been infected do not have any symptoms, but still carry the virus and can pass the virus to their sexual partner(s). Genital warts caused by HPV are usually painless; they can sometimes be itchy, bleed and/or have discharge. In women, regular pap tests can detect cell changes on the cervix that may be caused by HPV.

## How is it treated?

As HPV is caused by a virus, antibiotics are not effective. In most people, the virus usually clears the body by itself. Skin treatments are available to remove the genital warts but the treatments do not remove the virus from your body. Early detection of changes on the cervix (by a pap test) and treatment can prevent cancer of the cervix from developing.

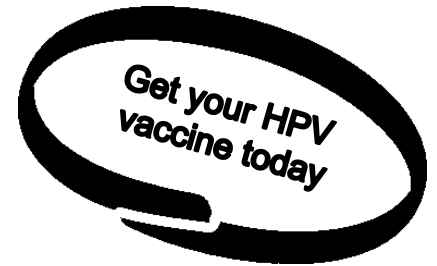
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For more information

Durham Region Health Department

905-666-6241 1-800-841-2729 durham.ca

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



## How can I protect myself?

- Practice safe sex and always use a condom when having oral, vaginal or anal sex. Condoms do not protect 100% from HPV, but they help reduce your risk of infection and provide protection against other STIs.
- If you are a woman and sexually active get regular pap testing to reduce the risk of cancer of the cervix.
- HPV vaccines are available to protect you against certain strains of HPV. Talk to your health care provider about getting vaccinated.
- Do not smoke. People who smoke are at increased risk of getting HPV.
- See *Facts About...Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine*.
- See *Facts About...Genital Warts*.

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For more information

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