



HPV INFORMATION

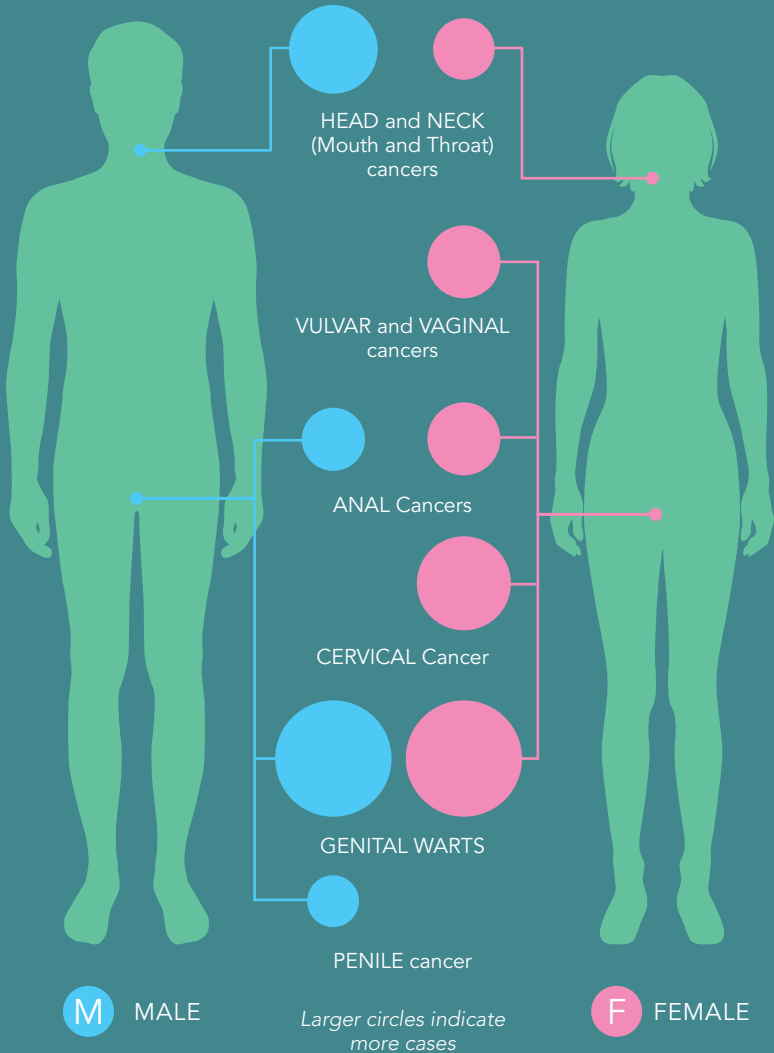
FOR WOMEN AND MEN

Cancers and warts that can
be caused by HPV

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PROPORTION OF POPULATION AFFECTED



GENITAL WARTS

The wart that you may get on your hands or under your feet is not the type that is being referred to here. We are talking about genital warts. In women, they can be found on the vulva, vagina, cervix, pubis, thighs or in and around the anus. In men, they can be found on the penis, scrotum, pubis, thighs or in and around the anus.

There may be one or many warts that you can see or feel. They may look like small, red or white cauliflowers. They may be flat or feel like small raised bumps. Most of them are painless but can sometimes cause burning or itching. Genital warts are often the only sign that someone has an HPV infection. In fact, genital warts are the most common sign of HPV in men.

Some studies have shown that 2 out of 3 people who have sexual contact with a person who has genital warts will develop genital warts within one to eight months of being exposed. These warts are considered a chronic infection, which means that once you are infected, you can develop warts at any time, for the rest of your life.

A health care professional can remove genital warts by using chemicals, laser surgery or freezing with liquid nitrogen. You can also can boost your immune system to develop resistance against the HPV virus. However, that does not mean that you are cured of HPV, that the warts won't return, or that you can't spread the virus to your sexual partners or newborns.

The risk of getting genital warts increases as your number of sexual partners increases or if you smoke.

The two HPV types responsible for 90% of the cases of genital warts are HPV 6 and 11. Vaccination can help prevent the incidence of genital warts.



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CERVICAL CANCER



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The cervix is the lower opening of the uterus. Cervical cancer, is almost exclusively caused by HPV and is estimated to be the second most frequent cancer in women aged 20-44 after breast cancer. In Canada, about 1,350 women are diagnosed each year and 410 die from this type of cancer.

A Pap test, or Pap smear, is a simple screening method that detects cell changes on your cervix. When abnormal cervical cells are found early, they can often be treated effectively before these changes become dangerous. If left untreated, abnormal cells can develop into cervical cancer.

If the Pap test results indicate that abnormal cells were found, the first step is to have a colposcopy. This procedure allows the gynaecologist or colposcopist to examine your cervix by using a special instrument (colposcope) that shines a light on your cervix and magnifies it.

Depending on the result, a control visit or treatment can be recommended. Should a treatment be required, your doctor may suggest cryosurgery, laser surgery or a LEEP procedure to remove the affected cells. Cryosurgery freezes cells off, laser surgery burns or vaporizes the cells off, and LEEP (Loop Electrosurgical Excision Procedure) removes the cells using a wire loop.

The four HPV types most commonly associated with cervical cancer are HPV 16, 18, 31 and 45. Vaccination can help prevent the incidence of cervical cancer.

VULVAR AND VAGINAL CANCERS

The vulva is the outer part of the female genitals. It includes the opening of the vagina, the outer lips and the inner lips. It extends upward to the clitoris and downward to the perineum.

Vulvar and vaginal cancers are more rare types of cancers representing approximately 3% of all gynaecologic cancers, but the number of women affected is increasing. There are two types of vulvar cancer. One is associated with HPV infection and tends to occur in younger women. The other is associated with vulvar skin disease (such as lichen sclerosis) and is more frequently found in older women.

Often, there are no signs or symptoms. If there are, they can appear as itching or burning that does not go away, pain in the pelvic area, abnormal vaginal bleeding, and difficulty urinating and/or painful intercourse. The Pap test does not screen for vulvar or vaginal cancers.



PENILE CANCER

Men can get cancer of the penis, just as women can get vulvar and vaginal cancers.

Penile cancer is a more rare type of cancer representing less than one percent of cancers in men.

Generally, penile cancer affects the head or foreskin of the penis rather than the shaft of the penis. Signs and symptoms can be a lump or ulcer on the penis. Growths can be raised, wart-like or flat and can be painful and inflamed. There may be itching and burning in the region as well.

For vulvar, vaginal, and penile cancers, treatment varies depending on how advanced the cancer is. It might include laser surgery, microsurgery, radiation therapy, and/or chemotherapy.

The two HPV types most commonly associated with vulvar and vaginal cancers are HPV 16 and 18. Vaccination can help prevent the incidence of vulvar and vaginal cancers, but has not been clinically proven to prevent penile cancer.



HEAD AND NECK CANCERS

Head and neck (mouth and throat) cancer includes cancers of the nose, sinuses, salivary glands, throat, larynx and lymph nodes in the neck. Head and neck cancers also include oral cancer. Oral cancer is a cancer of the mouth which commonly involves the lips and tongue and may occur on the roof or floor of the mouth, cheek lining or gums.

Head and neck (mouth and throat) cancers are usually associated with high tobacco and alcohol consumption but these numbers are going down while HPV related ones are going up. Head and neck (mouth and throat) cancers are linked with sexual behaviour including the practice of oral sex with a person infected with HPV.

Some typical symptoms of head and neck (mouth and throat) cancers include a lump or a sore in the head and neck area that does not heal, a sore throat that does not go away, white or red patches in the mouth, difficulty swallowing, and a change or hoarseness in the voice.



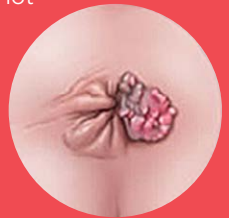
ANAL CANCERS

Cancer of the anus is rare but increasing. Anal cancer is similar to cervical cancer because the skin of the inside of the anus is a lot like the skin of the cervix and the skin outside of the anus is very similar to the skin of the vulva.

The infection can cause warts around and inside the anus. Symptoms can include anal bleeding, difficulty passing stools, pain or lumps, itching or discharge. In the presence of signs and symptoms, an internal anal examination should be performed.

In the presence of signs and symptoms of head and neck (mouth and throat) or anal cancer, a health-care professional may recommend imaging tests and biopsies. Treatments may include laser surgery, microsurgery, radiation therapy and/or chemotherapy.

The HPV type most commonly associated with head and neck (mouth and throat) and anal cancers is HPV 16.



PREVENTION

Condoms and dental dams are a good way to protect yourself from many kinds of STIs. Use them consistently. But when it comes to HPV, these do not provide enough protection. You can still get HPV from infected skin not covered by the condom or dam.

Vaccination is up to 99% effective at preventing the HPV types responsible for most genital warts and HPV-related cancers. There are three vaccines that are available and approved for use in Canada, each of which protects against certain HPV types.

Studies have shown that the vaccine is safe. Over 50 million doses of the vaccine have been given in North America. Other than minor side effects (like pain from the needle), people who get the vaccine are not at risk for major complications.

In terms of cervical cancer, research has shown that because of Canada's increase in pap test screening promotions, prevalence of cervical cancer has decreased and overall decrease in HPV related cancers with an increase in early detection of pre-cancerous conditions.

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