

# ASK YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER ABOUT THE HPV VACCINE

## Genital Warts (JEN-ih-tal warts)

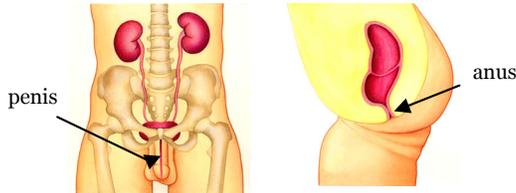
sometimes called “warts” or “HPV”

### What are genital warts?

They are caused by a **virus** called the human papillomavirus (pap-uh-LOAM-uh-VYE-rus) or HPV.

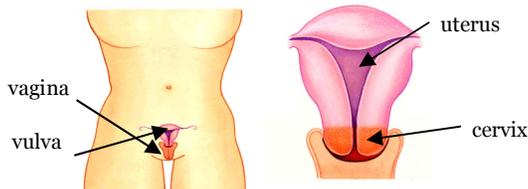
Men may find warts on or around:

- the penis or the anus.

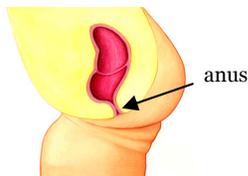


Women may find warts on or around:

- the vagina, vulva, or cervix



- or the anus.



### Is the virus (HPV) different from warts?

There are different types of HPV. Some types can lead to cancer of the cervix, and some cause warts. You can find out more about types of HPV from a health care provider.

### How do you get genital warts?

***If your genitals are touching or rubbing on or near the warts, you can get the virus.*** You can get it even if you can't see the warts. It can also be passed from mother to baby during birth.

You can't get it from:

- kissing or hugging
- shaking hands
- sharing food or using the same dish

### How do you know you have them?

***You may not notice that you have warts.***

They often look like small bumps and may be white or the color of your skin. Most of the time they won't be itchy or sore. You can have HPV without having any visible warts.

### What is the test like?

Most times, a doctor or nurse can tell by looking at the warts. In some cases, they may have to take some cells from the warts to look at more closely.

If the virus is on the cervix, a health care provider may have to wipe the area with a small swab. This is called a pap smear.



### How are genital warts treated?

***There is no cure for the virus that causes genital warts.*** In many cases, your body will get rid of the HPV virus on its own.

If you have warts, there are a lot of ways a health care provider can remove the warts, but the virus can stay there and can be passed to someone else. Talk with your health care provider about how you can manage the disease and stay healthy.

### What can you do to protect yourself?

- You can choose not to have sex
- You can reduce your number of partners if you choose to have sex
- You can use condoms when you have sex
- You can talk with your partner(s) about STDs
- You can talk with your health care provider about getting the HPV vaccine

***To find out more about STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) or for information about where you can go to get tested, call (617) 983-6940 or visit [www.mass.gov/dph/cdc/std](http://www.mass.gov/dph/cdc/std)***

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