

## GENITAL WARTS AND HPV

Genital warts are caused by several of the many types of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).

### Symptoms

Infection with the wart virus can cause single or multiple raised or flat warts. Warts can occur anywhere in the genital and anal areas and are usually painless and cause no other symptoms. Wart virus can be present without any visible warts.

### Transmission

Wart virus is spread by direct skin contact during sexual activity. It can take weeks, months or even years from the time of the contact before warts become visible.

### Diagnosis

Genital warts are diagnosed by looking at them. The wart virus on the cervix is diagnosed with a Pap smear.

For females it is important to have regular Pap smears to look for any changes on the cervix.

### Treatment

No treatment will reliably get rid of the virus or stop warts from coming back. In 20–30% of people who are treated, the warts will come back. There are several types of treatments that are commonly used.

*Podophyllotoxin - Wartec cream or Condylline paint.*

This treatment you can do yourself and the cream/paint is put on the wart twice a day for 3 days followed by a break for 4 days. This cycle can be repeated several times. This treatment should not be used if you are pregnant.

*Cryotherapy*

Cryotherapy involves freezing the warts. This may need to be repeated several times and will be done by a doctor or sexual health nurse.

*Imiquimod - Aldara*

This is a cream that you can use yourself. It is put on the wart overnight and then washed off. It is used 3 times a week and can be used for up to 3 months. This treatment should not be used in pregnancy.

### Partners

If you have warts then your partner should have a sexual health check up to see if they also have warts.

Using condoms and dams will reduce the risk of transmission of warts but will not fully prevent the possibility of transmission.

### Complications

All treatments for warts can cause itching, burning, ulceration and pain.

Wart virus can be associated with cell changes on the cervix, the vulval and the anal area. These changes can increase your risk of cancer in the future. Screening tests such as Pap smears look for these cell changes.

Smoking increases the risk of cell changes caused by wart virus progressing to cancer.

### Prevention

Vaccinations are now available to reduce the risk of wart virus associated genital cancers and warts.

*Sexual Health Service Tasmania is staffed Monday to Friday from 8.30 am until 5.00 pm. Clinic times vary from site to site so please contact your local office for details (see contact details on the back of this pamphlet).*

**Sexual Health Service  
Clinical Services**

**HOBART**

60 Collins Street  
Hobart 7000  
Ph: (03) 6233 3557

**LAUNCESTON**

42 Canning Street  
Launceston 7250  
Ph: (03) 6336 2216

**DEVONPORT**

23 Steele Street  
Devonport 7310  
Ph: (03) 6421 7759

**BURNIE**

11 Jones Street  
BURNIE 7320  
Ph: (03) 6434 6315

**SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICE  
A joint Australian and State  
Government Program**

*The Royal Hobart Hospital is Tasmania's largest hospital and provides a number of state-wide services including cardiothoracic surgery, neurosurgery, burns management, hyperbaric and diving medicine, neonatal intensive care and high-risk obstetrics. It is the major teaching and research hospital for the State and works closely with the University of Tasmania.*

*Many students in the health care professions are taught within the Hospital, and gaining skills in examining and interviewing patients is an important part of their education and training. We ask for your co-operation and encourage you to participate in our teaching and research activities. Your permission is required for participation.*

The Royal Hobart Hospital encourages feedback from patients, relatives and visitors. This feedback helps staff to better understand the needs of patients and provide the best possible patient care.



**The Royal Hobart Hospital  
is a smoke-free site**

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**Information  
Pamphlet**



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