

## If you think you may have genital warts

You can go to a sexual health clinic for a check up. You can ring for an appointment or sometimes drop in. At the clinic staff may be able to tell if you have warts just by looking. They may put cream or liquid on the warts and give you some cream to take home. They may also freeze the warts off. This will get rid of visible warts. Sometimes warts come back but more treatment at the clinic can get rid of them again.

For names and addresses of sexual health clinics call:

**Sexwise** 0800 28 29 30  
**Sexual Health Information Line** 0800 567 123  
**NHS Direct** 0845 4647

Or check out [www.ruthinking.co.uk](http://www.ruthinking.co.uk) and [www.playingsafely.co.uk](http://www.playingsafely.co.uk)

Sexual health clinics are free and confidential, so staff cannot tell anyone you have visited the clinic without your permission unless they believe you or someone else is in serious danger. Try telling your boyfriend or girlfriend if you think you have genital warts. If you do have genital warts it's very important you tell them so you can both get checked out.

## Questions you should ask at the clinic

At the clinic, the staff want to make sure you get the best treatment possible. So when you are at the clinic you should always ask the nurse or doctor:

- 1 – what is wrong with me?
- 2 – what do I need to do?
- 3 – why should I do it?

Their answers will help you to know what to do to get better and stay healthy.

If you want to know more about genital warts or want any further help and advice about sex or sexual health call **Sexwise 0800 28 29 30**.

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# You need to know ALL about GENITAL WARTS

Information  
and advice

**NHS**

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## Genital warts are one of the most common sexually transmitted infections in the UK. It is very common among young people.

Genital warts are caused by a virus called Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).

The genital wart virus causes warts around your genitals (the penis or vagina). Warts are small and can be fleshy hard lumps or bumps.

You can get rid of genital warts. However, the virus that causes genital warts cannot be cured. It stays in your body.

However lots of people live with the wart virus in their body and it does not cause any big health problems.

Both men and women can get genital warts. Usually genital warts are not painful but they can itch sometimes, bleed a little or make it difficult to pass urine.

## Genital warts and young men

Men can get genital warts on their penis, scrotum or anus (bumhole).



Men can get warts on their anus even if they haven't had anal sex.

Sometimes genital warts are too small to be seen, so you can have genital warts and not know about it.

## How do I protect myself against genital warts?

Using a condom will help protect you against genital warts.

When you use a condom remember to:

- not use a condom that is past its 'use by' date, which is written on the packet
- only use condoms that have this on the side  
- use a new condom each time you have sex
- put a condom on before your genitals (penis and vagina) touch

Condoms come in all shapes and sizes, so find the best one for you. Condoms can help protect you from most sexually transmitted infections and help avoid pregnancy.

## Genital warts and young women

Women can get genital warts in the vagina, on the vulva (lips of the vagina), on the cervix and on the anus (bumhole).

If you have warts inside the vagina or inside the anus you may not know you have got them. Sometimes they are too small to be seen. So you can have genital warts and not know about it.

## How do you catch genital warts?

You can catch genital warts by having sex with someone who already has the genital wart virus. You can catch genital warts by having vaginal and anal sex. You can also catch it when you are rubbing very closely against the other person's skin around the genitals during sex.

After you have caught genital warts it can take up to 3 months or even a lot longer for the warts to appear.

Many people catch the wart virus but do not get warts. Therefore you can get warts from other people who have never had any visible warts and do not know they have the wart virus. You can't get genital warts from the warts you get on other parts of your body, like your hands or your face.

You can get more than one sexually transmitted infection at the same time.

