

# Anal Warts

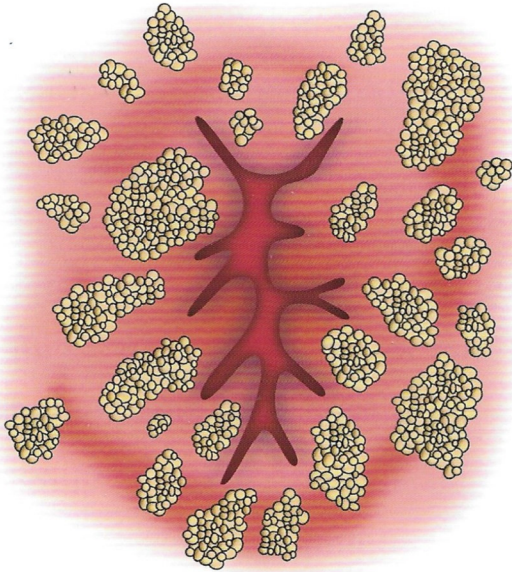


**ASCRS**  
American Society of  
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## Anal Warts

Anal warts (condyloma acuminata) are caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV), the most common sexually transmitted disease (STD). The warts affect the area around and inside the anus, but may also develop on the skin of the genital area. They first appear as tiny spots or growths, often as small as a pin head. They can grow quite large and cover the entire anal area.

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## Causes

Sexual intercourse is a common way to get infected with HPV. However, a person can become infected with HPV without having sexual intercourse. Any direct contact to the anal area (e.g. hand contact, fluids from an infected sexual partner) can cause HPV and anal or genital warts.

## Prevention

The HPV virus often remains in the body without any signs. There are steps you can take to help prevent anal warts.

- Do not have sexual contact with people who have anal (or genital) warts.
- Limit sexual contact to a single partner.
- Abstinence: Do not have any sexual contact.
- Always use condoms (this reduces, but does not eliminate the risk).
- Sexual partners should be checked for HPV and other STDs even when there are no symptoms.

## Symptoms

Warts are usually painless, so people may not realize they have them. The primary symptom is soft, moist bumps near or in the anus that are light brown or flesh colored. Additional symptoms may include:

- Itching.
- Bleeding.
- Mucus discharge.
- Feeling like there is a lump in the anal area.

## Diagnosis

Your physician will look at the skin around the anus, as well as the entire pelvic area, including the genitals. He or she may perform an exam of the anal canal with a small, lighted scope (anoscopy) to see if there are any warts inside the anal canal (internal anal warts).

## Treatment

If warts are not removed, they can grow larger and multiply. Left untreated, warts

may lead to an increased risk of anal cancer in the affected area. Internal anal warts may not respond to topical medications, so surgery may be required. Treatment options include:

- Topical medication: These creams usually work best if the warts are very small and located only on the skin around the anus.
- Topical medications that will freeze the warts (liquid nitrogen).
- Topical medications that will burn the warts (Trichloroacetic acid, podophyllin).
- Surgery: When the warts are either too large for the above mentioned treatments or are internal, surgery is considered. During surgery, the warts are surgically removed. The patient will be anesthetized for the procedure. The type of anesthetic depends on the number and exact location of the warts being removed. When there are many warts, your surgeon may perform the surgery in stages. An internal examination will also be performed so that any lesions on the inside can also be found and treated.

## **Post-Treatment Prognosis**

Mild pain and discomfort generally last for a few days. Pain medication may be prescribed. Patients treated in the clinic can return to work immediately. Those who have surgery can usually return to work the next day, while others who have more extensive surgery may stay home for several days to weeks.

Warts may come back repeatedly after successful removal. This happens because the HPV virus stays inactive for a period

of time in body tissues. When warts come back, they can usually be treated at your surgeon's office. If a large number of new warts develop quickly, surgery may be needed again.

It is important to discuss with your surgeon how often to schedule follow-up visits. During these visits, an exam will be done to make sure that all the warts are gone and no new ones have formed.