

There may be students and observers present during your consultation as part of their ongoing training. Please let the staff know if you do not wish any students to be present during your attendance.

Please ask a member of staff if you would like a chaperone present during your procedure.

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# Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)

## Patient information leaflet

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formacie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

## Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)

## Notes

There are more than 100 types of HPV. About 40 of these can infect the genital area of both men and women. They are called genital HPVs. Some of these cause genital warts and others can cause changes in the cervical cells that may eventually progress to cancer cells. These changes are usually detected by your cervical screening test, having a colposcopy or a biopsy.

HPV is so common that most adults are likely to have had it at some time in their lives. Estimates suggest that up to 70% of all women will have HPV at some time in their lives and that over a woman's lifetime, she has a 4 in 5 chance of being exposed to the virus.

HPV can affect the genital areas of both men and women, including skin of the penis, vulva (area outside the vagina), anus, cervix, vagina and mouth.

Fortunately for the majority of people, their immune system will fight off the HPV and clear it in 6 to 24 months.

The problem occurs when some women do not clear their HPV. The abnormal cells in the cervix are very easy to treat, but there are no outward signs or symptoms and the only way they can be found is by cervical screening.

## Further reading and information

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/human-papilloma-virus-hpv](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/human-papilloma-virus-hpv) (website)

[www.bsccp.org.uk](http://www.bsccp.org.uk) (NHSCSP information on HPV)

[www.gov.uk/guidance/cervical-screening-programme-overview](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/cervical-screening-programme-overview)

Contact information:

Gynaecology secretaries  
(Open Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm)

01695 656 123  
01695 656 262  
01695 656 658

## HPV key factors

- HPV is common.
- Most infections clear.
- HPV is transmitted by skin-to-skin contact, not only intercourse.
- Condoms do not provide complete protection.
- Attending your smear tests reduces the risk of developing cervical cancer.

### How is HPV transmitted?

Genital HPV is usually spread by sexual contact and it is easily transmitted from one person to another by any skin-to-skin contact, not just sexual intercourse. Because HPV is both common and easily transmitted, most adults will have had it at some point in their lives.

Although HPV is usually cleared within 24 months, it can sometimes remain for many years all the time without any signs or symptoms. Because of this, it is often very difficult to know when or where it came from.

### Can HPV be prevented?

It is difficult to avoid HPV. Although condoms are effective in preventing sexually transmitted infections, they are not as effective in preventing HPV. This is probably because the HPV can be found on skin not covered by the condom.

### Are there any treatments for HPV?

There are medical treatments for HPV types causing genital warts, but these do not work on the cervix. Fortunately, most HPV infections clear up on their own.

If the HPV has caused abnormal cells and they do not go, they will be removed to decrease the risk of cervical cancer developing. Removing these usually removes all the HPV also.

But building your immune system to prevent viruses will help. Quitting smoking also helps as smoking lowers your immunity and then it is harder to fight the virus off. HPV is not known to affect pregnancy.