



# GEORGIAN BAY WOMEN\*S CLINIC

## Genital Warts: What You Should Know

### What Are Genital Warts?

Genital warts are a common sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by certain strains of the human papillomavirus (HPV). They can appear on or around the genital and anal area and are usually flesh-colored or grayish with a cauliflower-like appearance.

### What Are the Symptoms?

Some people with genital warts don't have symptoms, while others may experience:

- Small, flesh-colored or grayish bumps in the genital or anal area
- Itching, burning, or discomfort in the affected area
- Bleeding during sex

### How Can You Prevent Them?

Practice Safe Sex: Using condoms can reduce the risk of HPV transmission, but they don't provide complete protection

since the virus can be present on areas not covered by the condom.

**Get Vaccinated:** HPV vaccines are available and can protect against certain strains of the virus that cause genital warts and cervical cancer.

**Avoid Smoking:** Smoking weakens the immune system and can increase the risk of developing genital warts.

## **How Are They Diagnosed?**

**Visual Inspection:** Healthcare providers can usually diagnose genital warts by examining the affected area.

**Biopsy:** In some cases, a small sample of tissue may be taken for further examination if the diagnosis is unclear.

## **How Are They Treated?**

**Medications:** Topical treatments, such as creams or solutions, can be applied directly to the warts to help remove them.

**In-office Procedures:** Healthcare providers may use methods like cryotherapy (freezing), laser therapy, or surgical removal to remove genital warts.

**Follow Instructions:** Follow your healthcare provider's instructions carefully for using medications or caring for treated areas.

## **Follow-Up**

**Regular Check-Ups:** Follow up with your healthcare provider as advised to monitor your condition and ensure the warts are treated effectively.

**Screening for Other STIs:** Since genital warts are caused by a virus transmitted through sexual contact, it's important to get screened for other STIs.

## **Remember:**

- Genital warts are common and treatable, but they can recur even after treatment.
- HPV vaccination is an effective way to prevent genital warts and other HPV-related health issues.
- If you notice any unusual bumps or growths in your genital or anal area, see your healthcare provider for evaluation and treatment