

About Warts and the Virus That Causes Them

Warts can occur on many different locations of your body, but these small skin growths all stem from the same cause—human papillomavirus, or HPV. The virus usually enters your body through a break in the skin. Warts occur most often in childhood or youth, and most go away on their own.

There are more than 100 types of HPV, but only a few types of warts:

- **Common warts** are usually found on the back of your hand or around your nails. They are raised, have a rough surface, and may have tiny black dots (which are actually blood vessels).
- **Flat warts** are smaller and smoother than common warts. They tend to occur in clusters and are often found on irritated areas such as the shaved legs of women or the shaved faces of men.
- **Plantar warts** are similar to common warts, but occur on the soles of your feet. They are not raised because the pressure of walking flattens them. Like common warts, they may have small black dots, and like flat warts, they also can grow in clusters.
- **Filiform warts** are warts with thread-like growths. They usually occur on the eyelids, face or neck.
- **Genital warts** grow on the genitals. They are soft rather than rough and can be sexually transmitted. Treatment options include medication, laser treatments, burning or freezing.

Genital warts and HPV have been in the news recently because of the new vaccine available to protect girls and young women against strains of HPV that cause genital warts and some types of cervical cancer. (The types of HPV that cause cervical cancer are not the same as those that cause genital warts.)

For more information about the vaccine, visit
http://www.lvh.org/lvh/Your_LVH/LVH_News%7C905 or call 610-402-CARE.



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