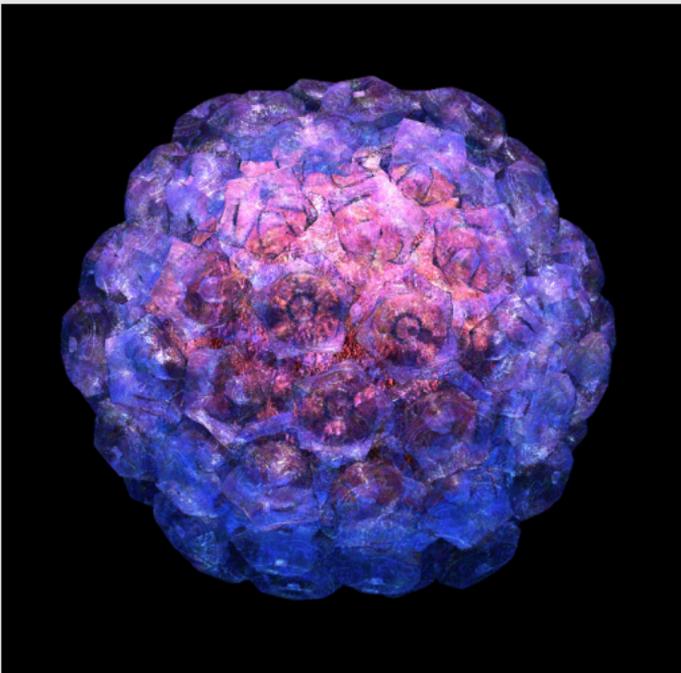


HPV



HUMAN PAPILLOMA VIRUS

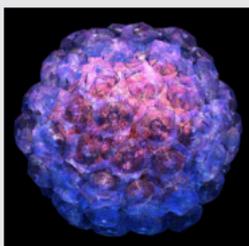
 **maple leaf** medical clinic

WHAT IS HPV?

HUMAN PAPILLOMA VIRUS (HPV)

is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI). Most people who become infected with HPV do not even know they have it. HPV is so common that at least 50% of sexually active men and women get it at some point in their lives. Sexually active HIV-positive men have detectable HPV infection rates as high as 90%.

There are more than 40 HPV types that can infect the genital areas of males and females and they are referred to by number. Four of these HPV types are associated with most anal and genital cancers; type 16 is the type most commonly associated with anal cancer.



WHAT ARE HPV TYPES?

Different “strains” of HPV are called types. An HPV type can be categorized as “high-risk” or “low-risk” referring to its association with cancer.

The types of HPV that can cause genital warts are not the same as the types that can cause cancer, for example type 6 is associated with only genital warts.

DISEASE	HPV TYPE
Genital warts (or minor changes)	Low-risk: 6, 11, 42, 44, and others
Genital cancers	High-risk: 16, 18, 31, 33, 35, 39, 45, 51, 52, 56, 58, 59, 68

Typing of HPV can be done using swabs of the genitals (such as anal swabs). A single swab shows only the presence of HPV at the time of the swab; it is not a perfect test and it may miss detecting all of the HPV types that are present.

AN EXAMPLE OF AN ANAL SWAB RESULT:

TEST	RESULT
HPV genotyping by NML-Luminex	Detected Viral DNA corresponding to HPV type(s) Low risk: 6,67, High risk: 16

The above result shows that with the swab performed, low-risk HPV types 6 and 67 were present, and high-risk type 16 was present.

HOW IS HPV TRANSMITTED?

HPV is passed on by contact most often during vaginal or anal sex. It may also be passed on during oral sex and genital-to-genital contact.

A person can show signs of HPV even if years have passed since he or she had sexual contact with an infected person. Most infected persons do not realize they are infected or that they are passing the virus on to a sexual partner. HPV can be transmitted whether or not there are visible warts — not all HPV types cause visible warts.

It is possible to get more than one type of HPV.

SYMPTOMS AND RELATED DISEASES

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF HPV?

Most people with HPV do not develop symptoms or health problems from it. Certain populations are at higher risk for some HPV-related health problems. This includes gay (MSM) and bisexual men, and people with weak immune systems (including those who have HIV/AIDS). There is no way to know which people who get HPV will go on to develop cancer or other health problems.

GENITAL WARTS

Genital warts usually appear as a small bump or groups of bumps in the genital area. They can be small or large, raised or flat, or shaped like a cauliflower and they are usually painless. Health care providers can diagnose warts by looking at the genital area during an office visit. Warts can appear within weeks, months or more after sexual contact with an infected partner—even if the infected partner has no signs of genital warts. If left untreated, visible genital warts might go away, remain unchanged, or increase in size or number.

High-risk HPV types are associated with cervical cancer, anal cancer, and other types of cancer such as vulva, vagina, penis, and head and neck cancers.

CERVICAL CANCER

Cervical cancer usually does not have symptoms until it is quite advanced. For this reason, it is important for women to get regular screening for cervical cancer. Screening tests (i.e. a Pap smear) can find early signs of disease so that problems can be treated early, before they ever turn into cancer.

ANAL CANCER

There are about 40 new cases of anal cancer per 100,000 MSM in the USA every year. Anal cancer is biologically different from colon cancer. There is currently no anal cancer screening program similar to the Pap program for cervical cancer. Anal pap smears (similar to those used for cervical screening) are being studied for the early detection of changes associated with anal cancer. In addition, various treatments for the early changes of cancer are being studied.

HOW CAN HPV INFECTION BE PREVENTED?

Condoms may lower the risk of HPV transmission. To be most effective, they should be used with every sex act, from start to finish. However, HPV can infect areas that are not covered by a condom - so condoms may not fully protect against HPV.

People can also lower their chances of getting HPV by limiting their number of sex partners, but even people with only one lifetime sex partner can get HPV.

Gardasil® is a vaccine that helps prevent infection with HPV types 6, 11, 16, and 18. For people who are not already infected with these HPV types, this vaccine might be beneficial.

IS THERE TREATMENT FOR HPV OR RELATED DISEASES?

There is no treatment to eradicate the virus once it is acquired. It is estimated that many HPV infections are naturally cleared by the body, or at least suppressed to levels that are not detected so they presumably have no detrimental effects. However, there are treatments for the diseases the HPV can cause.

Visible genital warts can be treated by a health care provider. Some people choose not to treat warts, but prefer to wait to see if they disappear on their own.

Cervical cancer is most treatable when it is diagnosed and treated early. Women who get routine Pap tests and follow up as needed can identify problems before cancer develops.

Anal cancer screening is currently being investigated in studies using similar models to screening for cervical cancer in women.

ABOUT MAPLE LEAF MEDICAL CLINIC

Maple Leaf Medical Clinic (MLMC)
is dedicated to serving the local community
and those living with HIV. Please follow-up
with your doctor for more information.



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