

GENITAL WARTS

REPORTING INFORMATION

- Genital Warts, otherwise known as human papillomavirus (HPV) infection, is not reportable in Ohio.

AGENT

More than 20 types of HPV can infect the genital tract. Visible genital warts usually are caused by HPV types 6 or 11. Other HPV types in the anogenital region (i.e., types 16, 18, 31, 33, and 35) have been strongly associated with cervical dysplasia.

CASE DEFINITION

Clinical description

An infection characterized by the presence of visible, exophytic (raised) growths on the internal or external genitalia, perineum, or perianal region

Laboratory criteria for diagnosis

- Histopathologic changes characteristic of human papillomavirus infection in specimens obtained by biopsy or exfoliative cytology, or
- Demonstration of virus by antigen or nucleic acid detection in a lesion biopsy

Case classification

Probable: a clinically compatible case without histopathologic diagnosis and without microscopic or serologic evidence that the growth is the result of secondary syphilis

Confirmed: a clinically compatible case that is laboratory confirmed.

Comment

Genital warts should be reported only once per patient. The first diagnosis for a patient with no previous diagnosis should be reported.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

HPV infection can be symptomatic or asymptomatic. When symptomatic, genital warts can appear in and around the vagina, penis, and anus. Depending on the size and anatomic location, warts can be painful, friable, and/or pruritic.

DIAGNOSIS

See case definition.

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Source

Humans, sexually transmitted in most cases.

Occurrence

An estimated 5.5 million Americans are infected each year. About 20 million people are already infected with HPV.

Mode of Transmission

Transmission is usually through sexual contact.

Incubation Period

Two weeks to three months after exposure

PUBLIC HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Treatment

There is no cure. Warts can be removed through medication or surgery. Even with such treatment, the virus stays in the body and warts can reappear in the future. The primary goal of treating visible genital warts is the removal of symptomatic warts thus providing wart-free periods in most patients.

Public Health Significance

Increased risk of genital cancer for men and women. Some virus types cause the most common form of cervical cancer in women.