

## How can I be vaccinated against HPV?

Currently, Gardasil vaccine is provided free through school-based programs for females aged 12–13.

Outside of the school vaccination program, Gardasil (males 9–15 yrs, females 9–45 yrs) and Cervarix (females 10–45 yrs) are available on private prescription but at a significant cost.

## Do I need Pap smear tests if I've had the HPV vaccination?

Yes. Although vaccinations will protect against the HPV infection that causes 70% of cervical cancers, you are still at risk of infection from other HPV types.

**Regular Pap smears are still the most important protection against cervical cancer.**

## More information...

### Clinic 275

Tel: 8222 5075  
Country callers: 1800 806 490  
Address: 275 North Terrace, Adelaide  
Website: [www.stdservices.on.net](http://www.stdservices.on.net)

### SA Cervix Screening Program

Tel: 8226 8181  
Country callers: 13 15 56  
Address: L2, Citi Centre, 11 Hindmarsh Sq, Adelaide  
Website: [www.cervixscreening.sa.gov.au](http://www.cervixscreening.sa.gov.au)

## SHine SA contact details

### East/West Primary Health Care Team

GP Plus Health Care Centre  
64c Woodville Road, Woodville  
Postal address: PO Box 76 Woodville SA 5011  
Tel: 8300 5300  
Clinic appointments: 8300 5301

### Northern Primary Health Care Team

43 Peachey Road, Davoren Park  
Postal address: PO Box 719 Davoren Park SA 5113  
Tel: 8256 0700

### Southern Primary Health Care Team

19–23 Beach Road, Christies Beach  
Postal address: PO Box 330 Christies Beach SA 5165  
Tel: 8186 8600

### Workforce Development & Resources

64c Woodville Road, Woodville  
Postal address: PO Box 76 Woodville SA 5011  
Tel: 8300 5317  
Email: [SHineSACourses@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:SHineSACourses@health.sa.gov.au)

### Library & Resource Centre

64c Woodville Road, Woodville  
Postal address: PO Box 76 Woodville SA 5011  
Tel: 8300 5312  
Email: [SHineSALibrary@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:SHineSALibrary@health.sa.gov.au)

### Sexual Healthline

Available 9 am – 1 pm, Monday – Friday  
Tel: 1300 883 793  
Country callers (toll free): 1800 188 171  
Email: [sexualhealthhotline@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:sexualhealthhotline@health.sa.gov.au)

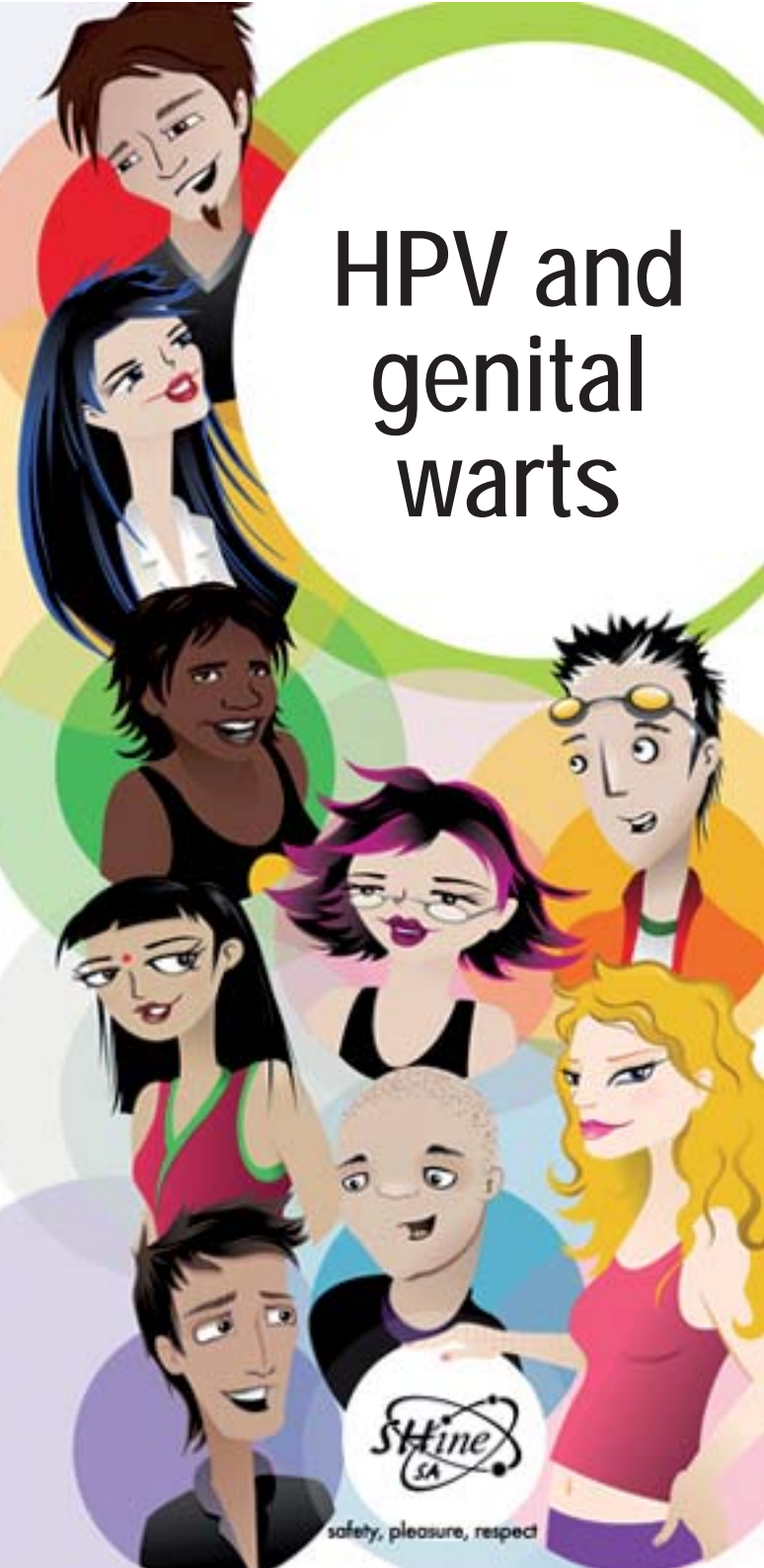
### Website

[www.shinesa.org.au](http://www.shinesa.org.au)

National Relay Service: [www.relayservice.com.au](http://www.relayservice.com.au)  
133 677 (TTY/Voice) 1300 555 727 (Speak & Listen)

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To download the most recent version visit [www.shinesa.org.au](http://www.shinesa.org.au)

# HPV and genital warts



safety, pleasure, respect

## What is HPV?

HPV (Human papilloma virus) is the virus that causes wart infection in both females and males. There are many types of HPV that affect different parts of the body and some of them can infect the genital area. Genital HPV is usually a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Anyone who has ever had sex can have HPV – it's so common that four out of five people will have had HPV at some time in their lives.

## How do I know if I have warts/HPV?

Most people will not know they have HPV because it can stay inactive inside the body or it can produce an infection that is invisible.

Some types of HPV cause warts. Genital warts often appear as lumps and may be itchy.

Invisible infection in the cervix may show up on a Pap smear test.

It can take some time for HPV to become active. In most cases the HPV infection is cleared by the body in around one to two years, but for some people it may remain active.

## How do I get HPV?

HPV is spread through genital skin contact. The virus passes through tiny breaks in the skin.

Using condoms with a new sexual partner helps to protect against STIs and may help to decrease the risk of getting HPV. They do not provide total protection because they do not cover all of the genital skin and the HPV infection is often invisible. If a person has visible warts then wart-to-skin contact should be avoided to decrease the risk of spreading the infection.

## Should I tell my partner if I have genital warts?

It is best to discuss this with your current sexual partner. Visit a sexual health clinic or your doctor for more information and a check-up.

## What are the treatment options for warts?

There is a variety of methods available. If the method you are using is not working it's important to discuss this with a health worker. Treatments include:

- **Wart paint** (Podophyllotoxin – e.g. Condyline, Wartec): This can be applied by the person with the warts or by a health worker. It can be bought over-the-counter at pharmacies. If warts remain after 4–5 weeks of treatment see your doctor. Do not use during pregnancy.
- **Wart cream** (Imiquimod – e.g. Aldara): This cream is available on prescription. It is expensive, but there is a low chance of the warts reappearing after use. Treatment can take 8–12 weeks. Do not use during pregnancy.
- **Freezing** (Cryotherapy): This uses frozen gas applied by a health worker. It may cause some discomfort. You may need several treatments. It is quite effective and available at most SHine SA clinics.
- **Laser therapy, or electrosurgery**: These treatments require referral and admission to hospital for anaesthesia and surgery.

If skin irritation occurs during treatment, taking a saltwater bath can help soothe the area.

## How is HPV related to cervical cancer?

In a small number of women, an invisible type of HPV can stay in the cells of the cervix. If the infection is not cleared, the virus can cause cell changes that may lead to cervical cancer. This will usually take a long time – often more than 10 years. Most women who have HPV clear the virus naturally and DO NOT develop cervical cancer.

Only a few of the many genital HPV types increase a woman's chance of having cancer. The HPV types causing visible genital warts are not associated with cervical cancer.

A Pap smear test every two years can detect any abnormal cell changes caused by HPV. These changes can be monitored and/or treated to prevent cancer.

Smoking is a major risk factor in developing cancer of the cervix.

## Can HPV infection be prevented?

Two vaccines are currently available that can prevent infection from certain types of HPV. The vaccines are given as 3 injections within a 6-month period.

- **Gardasil** prevents 2 types of HPV that are linked to the majority (70 %) of cervical cancers and a further 2 types that are linked to visible external genital warts.
- **Cervarix** prevents the same 2 types of HPV that are linked to cervical cancer.

The vaccines will only prevent infection from the types of HPV contained in the vaccine. They cannot protect females against cervical cancer and genital warts caused by other HPV types that are not contained in the vaccine.

The vaccines will only prevent infection if there has been no previous exposure to these types of HPV. The ideal time to vaccinate, therefore, is before sexual activity begins.