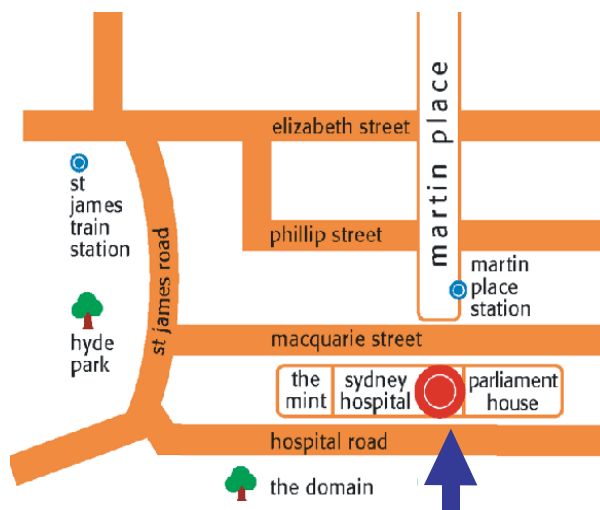


## Sydney Sexual Health Centre



The Sydney Sexual Health Centre provides a free, confidential and comprehensive service that helps put you in control of your sexual health. The service supports your sexual health by providing screening, vaccination and management of sexually transmissible infections including HIV and hepatitis B, women's and men's sexual health care, education, individual and couple counselling, and needle and syringe program. The service offers a choice of male and female doctors, nurses and counsellors who are respectful of your lifestyle and sexuality.

### NO MEDICARE CARD REQUIRED

#### Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10am-6pm  
Wednesday 2-6pm

**Telephone: (02) 9382 7440**

#### Internet:

[www.sesahs.nsw.gov.au/sydhosp/SSHC.asp](http://www.sesahs.nsw.gov.au/sydhosp/SSHC.asp)

**Sexual Health Infoline: 1800 451 624**

M-F 9am-5:30pm

## NSW/ACT Sexual Health Services

### Free & confidential sexual health care

Albury	Ph: (02) 6058 1840
Armidale	Ph: (02) 6776 4738
Bourke	Ph: (02) 6872 2145
Broken Hill	Ph: (08) 8080 1556
Canberra	Ph: (02) 6244 2184
Coffs Harbour	Ph: (02) 6656 7865
Dareton	Ph: (03) 5021 7200
Dubbo	Ph: (02) 6885 1700
Forster	Ph: (02) 6555 1800
Gosford	Ph: (02) 4320 2114
Goulburn	Ph: (02) 4827 3913
Griffith	Ph: (02) 6966 9900
Katoomba	Ph: (02) 4784 6560
Kings Cross	Ph: (02) 9360 2766
Kogarah	Ph: (02) 9350 2742
Lightning Ridge	Ph: (02) 6829 9900
Lismore	Ph: (02) 6620 2980
Liverpool	Ph: (02) 9827 8022
Manly	Ph: (02) 9977 3288
Marrickville	Ph: (02) 9560 3057
Mt Druitt	Ph: (02) 9881 1733
Newcastle	Ph: (02) 4923 6909
Nowra	Ph: (02) 4423 9353
Orange	Ph: (02) 6392 8600
Parramatta	Ph: (02) 9843 3124
Penrith	Ph: (02) 4734 2507
Port Kembla	Ph: (02) 4276 2399
Queanbeyan	Ph: (02) 6298 9233
Richmond	Ph: (02) 4578 1622
St Leonards	Ph: (02) 9926 7414
Sydney City	Ph: (02) 9382 7440
Tamworth	Ph: (02) 6766 3095
Taree	Ph: (02) 6592 9421
Wagga Wagga	Ph: (02) 6938 6492

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# Genital Warts & Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)

SSHC SYDNEY  
SEXUAL  
HEALTH  
CENTRE

## **What is a genital wart infection?**

Genital and anal wart infections are caused by several types of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). There are over 100 different types of HPV affecting various parts of the body and about 40 affect the genitals.

It is estimated that most of the sexually active population will acquire HPV usually when they first become sexually active. However, only a small number of people with the virus will develop visible genital warts.

## **How do I know if I have a Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) infection?**

HPV may present in the following ways:

- Visible warts which can be found anywhere on the genital or anal area.
- Sub-clinical infection - no warts are visible but the virus is detected on Pap smear or biopsy.

## **How does someone get infected?**

HPV is usually transmitted through genital skin contact during sexual activity. If people are having new or casual partners they are advised to always use condoms. This will help protect them from other sexually transmissible diseases and provide a high degree of protection against HPV. However, condoms do not cover all the genital skin.

For people in long-term relationships who have not been using condoms, starting to use them may not be realistic. It is possible that your partner may already have the virus even if they do not have visible warts. It is important for the couple to make the decision about

condom use together. If you are worried about passing HPV on to your partner discussing it with a doctor or nurse may be useful.

## **Do sexual partners need treatment?**

It may be advisable for concerned sexual partners to see a doctor or nurse for a check-up if they have any unexplained lumps. If you are unsure about how to discuss this with your sexual partner, you should speak to a counsellor, nurse or doctor at a sexual health clinic or your local doctor.

## **What is the treatment for HPV?**

There is currently no cure for the HPV virus. In the majority of people, their body's immune system clears the virus. For women who have had HPV virus detected on their cervix follow-up with Pap smears as advised by your doctor.

Visible genital warts can be removed by applying a paint or cream, freezing, diathermy (burning) or laser. Treatment can sometimes require several visits and recurrences can occur after any form of treatment. The doctor or nurse will discuss which treatment is most suitable for you.

## **What is the link between HPV and cancer?**

Some types of the HPV have been linked with abnormal cell changes on the cervix, vulva, penis or anus. However, only a few of these viruses are strongly associated with cancer. This association seems to act together with other factors, one of which may be smoking. Visible genital warts are less likely to lead to

cell changes that precede cancer. The types of HPV that are linked to abnormal cell changes usually cause sub-clinical infections.

## **What else should I know?**

- Using condoms provides a high degree of protection if they cover the area of the visible genital warts. However, HPV may be found in other areas of the genital or anal skin.
- Treatment of visible genital warts can be frustrating. It may take several treatments to clear the virus.
- If you are having treatment for visible genital warts, you should keep the area clean and dry by bathing in salty water and drying the area thoroughly - once a day should be enough.
- Minimise or stop smoking.
- Remember women should make sure they have regular Pap smears. The doctor or nurse will discuss when the next Pap smear should be taken.
- Condoms will help protect against other sexually transmitted infections. Use a condom with new or casual sexual partners.
- A vaccine is now available for young people to help protect against HPV infection (types 6,11,16,18) most strongly associated with cervical cancer, precancerous lesions and genital warts. For further information and cost discuss with your local doctor.

*Acknowledgement: Adapted from the HPV Australia and New Zealand HPV Project. A Patient Guide HPV (wart virus) in Perspective*