

HPV

Saturday, 15 December 2007

A viral infection (Human papilloma virus) – the therapy is for reducing the symptoms.

There are more than 70 different types of HPV, from which the types 16, 18, 31 and 33 are proved to be the cause for pre-malignant and malignant changes on the uterus – which makes this disease potentially lethal to women. Malignant changes are classified with CIN 1,2 or 3 (stadiums of the changes).

These types of viruses also cause condilomes – skin, fleshy, pain free and soft excrescence of different shapes with rough surfaces. Condilomes are also caused by some other types of HPV, but they aren't always linked with malignant changes.

Men more often report this state than women do, probably because condilomes are visible on the penis. However, the infected person could transmit the virus on his sexual partner even if he doesn't have visible symptoms.

Condilomes occur after a few weeks, or they could occur 20 months after the moment of infection. Condilomes can grow, and in some cases these humps can occur in a grape-like shape (bursting of condilomes causes the virus to spread on the surrounding area)!

Women – HPV is confirmed to be the cause of malignant changes that could lead to uterus cancer. Condilomes occur on the vulva, inside the vagina, cervix or around the anus.

Men – condilomes occur on the penis's body, around the genitals, cervix and anus.

Condilomes can also occur in the rectum, as a consequence of infection during an anal sexual intercourse, or in the mouth, during oral sex.

If a pregnant woman has condilomes, there is a risk that the infection could spread on her newborn infant during labor. Condilomes can be treated in different ways, usually by regulated liquid chemicals imiquimod, podofilin or condilox, which are used on the outer genital areas by direct application.

The therapy is repeated until the condilomes have disappeared. Cryo-therapy could also be applied, by which condilomes are eliminated by freezing, or by electro coagulation, by which they are burned.

There is also laser treatment, surgical removal or injection of interferon in every condilome (a protein which stimulates the body's immunity on the virus). In spite of the therapy, HPV infection cannot be completely cured and condilomes often occur again.

If a woman has condilomes, or if her partner has them, should take the PAPA-test at least once a year for controlling the cervical unit. People are usually warned to avoid sexual contacts if the condilomes are visible.

Although the infection may be spread even if the person doesn't have condilomes, there is a risk of infecting the sexual partner. For short-term prevention of a repeated condilome occurrence, condoms or femidoms should be used 12 weeks after the therapy is concluded. However, this isn't a complete prevention because it doesn't always cover the entire infected area.

Treatment lasts for a long time, it is psychophysically difficult and expensive, and a complete recovery isn't yet possible. If the malignant changes are confirmed by the PAPA-test at their early phase – the therapy would be less painful and the chance of suffering from uterus cancer, which could metastasize and cause death, would be reduced. It is recommendable that every woman takes the PAPA-test at least once a year.