**Bumps/lumps on penis** [1]

1) Dear Alice,

I have some small bumps near the base end of my penis and on my scrotum. The bumps do not look like herpes or genital warts. They look almost like goosebumps, but they are always there. I am still a virgin so I don't see how I could have an STD.

I would be thankful for any help or advice you can offer.

2) Dear Alice,

After examining my penis in the shower, I realized that I have small bumps (all the same size) on the bottom of my penis shaft. I am only 14 and am going thru puberty, so I want to know if the pubic hair grows onto the penis, or just stays on the bottom (mine are only on the bottom). I have never had sex so I know it cannot be an STD.

3) Dear Alice,

I am a 20-year-old male with a question. Since I can remember, I've had many bumps (small lumps under the skin) covering the underside shaft of my penis, as well as my scrotum. They are very similar to the bumps I've noticed on girls' nipples. When I went to the "Doc," I was told they were normal and fine. My question to you is: Exactly how "normal" are these bumps and how common? Do all males have them?

**Answer**

Dear Readers,

The human body comes in many different sizes, shapes, and textures. So, being aware of how your penis typically looks and feels is a healthy habit, even before you've had much (if any) exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STIs). If you know what's normal for your penis, you'll be more likely to notice changes that might warrant further investigation. Due to the lower-risk you've all described, the mystery bumps likely fall into the 'non-problematic' camp. However, it may be wise to talk with a health care provider any time you're concerned about changes with your body.

Without a diagnosis from a medical professional, it's unclear exactly what the penis bumps may be. Excluding any typical STIs that may cause bumps or changes in the skin of the genital area, there are a few conditions that have similar characteristics to the ones each of
you have described, including:

- **Fordyce spots** are a fancy name for visible sebaceous glands. These glands secrete oily substance (called sebum) to lubricate the skin and hair. They can be found in multiple places around the body, including near the base of the penile shaft and scrotum. You'll most likely see hair growing from them (if not now, then soon!). And to answer your question, Reader #2, hair can grow on the shaft of the penis, though most often just near the base. They're harmless and pretty common, though treatments are available for folks concerned about aesthetics. But, it may be helpful to keep in mind that treatment isn't often advised because of the potential side effects.

- **Folliculitis** is the infection and inflammation of hair follicles. It's an infection caused by a pathogen that gets in through damaged hair follicles, which can be caused by tight clothing, shaving, or the blockage of a hair follicle. Symptoms can include rash, itchy skin, pimples, or pustules around a hair follicle. It can be treated with antiseptics, oral or topical antibiotics, or oral antifungals (depending on the type of the pathogen).

- **Molluscum contagiosum** is a viral infection of the skin. It's harmless and it's often found on children and young adults. It can spread either nonsexual or sexually, essentially by coming in contact with someone that is currently infected (and less often, from contact with items that have touched an infected person, such as a towel). A diagnosis is made through a visual examination, though a skin biopsy may be done if it's deemed necessary. Treatment options are available, however, it typically goes away on its own within a year.

- **Pearly penile papules**, or PPPs, are small, white bumps that form around the ridge of the penis glans (more popularly called the head or the tip). While PPPs are benign and not contagious, they're sometimes confused for symptoms associated with STIs or other non-contagious skin conditions.

On the other hand, bumps or lumps that are few in number, seem to have a timely association with sexual activity, or grow in size may be genital warts. It's spread through skin-to-skin contact, meaning no exchange of body fluids or penetrative sex need to occur in order to transmit the virus. Genital warts, once correctly diagnosed, may be removed, but they may come and go over a person's lifetime.

Chatting with your health care provider can help you get you some piece of mind about these lumps and bumps in question and any treatment (if necessary) To learn even more on the subject, check out more Q&As in the Genital wonderings and Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) categories in the Go Ask Alice! archives.

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