

Warts

Definition

- Warts are small raised growths that have a rough surface
- Viral infection of the skin

Health Information

Symptoms

- Raised, round, rough-surfaced growths on the skin
- Skin-colored or pink
- Most commonly occur on the hands, especially the fingers
- Not painful unless located on the sole of the foot (plantar wart). Also can be painful if on part of a finger used for writing.

Cause

- Warts are caused by several human papilloma viruses
- Different types of warts are caused by different papilloma viruses

Prevention of Spread to Others

- Avoid baths or hot tubs with other children. Reason: Warts can spread in warm water.
- Also, avoid sharing washcloths or towels.
- Contact sports: Warts can spread to other team members. Warts should be covered or treated.
- Time it takes to get warts after close contact: 3 months

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Warts are common (10% of children).
- Warts are harmless and most can be treated at home.
- The sooner you treat them, the less they will spread.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Wart-Removing Acid:

- Buy a wart medicine with 17% salicylic acid. There are many brands (Compound W, Duofilm, Wart-Off). No prescription is needed.
- Apply the acid once a day to the top of the wart. If there are many warts, treat the 3 largest ones.
- Since it's an acid, avoid getting any near the eyes or mouth. Also try to keep it off the normal skin.
- The acid will turn the wart into dead skin (it will turn white).

3. **Duct Tape - Cover the Wart:**

- The acid will work faster if it is covered with duct tape. Do not use regular tape.
- If you don't want to use an acid, use duct tape alone.
- Covering warts with duct tape can irritate the warts. This will turn on the body's immune system.
- Cover as many of the warts as possible. (Cover at least 3 of them.)
- The covered warts become red and start to die. Once this happens, often ALL the warts will go away.
- Try to keep the warts covered all the time.
- Remove the tape once per day, usually before bathing. Then replace it after bathing.
- Some children child object to having the tape on at school. At the very least, tape it every night.

4. **Remove Dead Wart:**

- Once or twice a week, remove the dead wart material. Do this by paring it down with a disposable razor.
- This is easier to do than you think. It shouldn't cause any pain or bleeding.
- Soak the area first in warm water for 10 minutes. (Reason: The dead wart will be easier to remove.)
- Some children won't want you to cut off the layer of dead wart. Rub it off with a washcloth instead.

5. **Prevention of Spread to Other Areas of Your Child's Body:**

- Discourage your child from picking at the wart. Picking it and scratching a new area with the same finger can spread warts. A new wart can form in 1 to 2 months.
- Chewing or sucking on them can lead to similar warts on the face.
- If your child is doing this, cover the wart with a Band-Aid.
- Keep your child's fingernails cut short and wash your child's hands more often.

6. **What to Expect:**

- Without treatment, warts go away in about 2 years.
- With home treatment, they can usually be cleared up in 2 to 3 months.
- With medical treatment (usually freezing) most warts are cured in a few visits.
- There are no shortcuts to treating warts.

7. **Return to School:**

- Your child doesn't have to miss any child care or school for warts.
- There is only a mild risk that warts spread to others.

Call Your Doctor If

- Warts develop on the feet, genitals, or face
- New warts develop after 2 weeks of treatment
- Warts are still present after 12 weeks of treatment
- You think your child needs to be seen

Pediatric Care Advice

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