

What are warts?

Warts are common growths on the skin. They are caused by a virus called the human papilloma virus (HPV).

Warts can occur anywhere on the body. Depending on where they appear, they can look different.

- » On the face, warts can look like skin tags.
- » Warts on the hands or feet may be flat and rough.
- » On other parts of the body, warts usually look like rough bumps.

TREATMENTS FOR WARTS

There is no treatment that is effective for all warts. Treating warts can take some trial and error to decide what works best for the patient. Treatment options include:

NO TREATMENT

Wart treatments can be painful and irritating. If the warts are not bothering the child, no treatment is needed. Warts often go away, even without treatment.

OVER-THE COUNTER TREATMENT

Salicylic acid comes as a liquid or gel that can be applied to the wart. Treatment takes several months. If the acid irritates the skin, take a break for 1-2 nights, then, restart treatment.

PRESCRIPTION CREAMS

Prescription treatment may be prescribed by your provider. Prescription options for warts include retinoids (adapalene, tretinoin, tazarotene), 5-fluorouracil, and imiquimod. These treatments can also be irritating to the wart and surrounding skin.

PARING

Paring is gentle filing of the wart before other treatments. It can help make other wart treatments more effective.

CRYOTHERAPY

This is also known as "freezing." A cold liquid is applied to the wart. Cryotherapy is painful. The treatment may cause a blister. Multiple treatments are needed for most warts. A milder at-home freezing treatment is now also available over-the-counter.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF WARTS

- » Warts are spread by touching. Avoid picking at warts.
- » Wear flip-flops or sandals instead of walking barefoot.
- » Avoid sharing towels, grooming tools, or other personal items that have been used near a wart.

IN-OFFICE INJECTIONS

Medication is injected directly into the warts. Multiple injections are needed about 1 to 2 months apart. Injections can be painful and are not recommended in younger children. Injections can be considered in older children who are bothered by stubborn warts.

OTHER TREATMENT OPTIONS

Less common treatments include squaric acid therapy, laser treatment, and oral immune therapies.

TREATING WARTS AT HOME

HOW TO APPLY AT-HOME WART TREATMENTS:

- Most at-home treatments will be applied nightly. Follow your provider's instructions carefully.
- If the wart is thick enough to stick up off the skin, gently file the surface with a nail file or pumice stone used only for this purpose.
- Try soaking the warts in warm water for 5 minutes before treatment. This helps the medicine get in more effectively. Treating after a bath/shower also works.
- Apply the wart medicine directly to the wart, avoiding the normal skin.
- If needed, apply petroleum jelly to the surrounding skin before using the treatment. This protects the normal skin. Once the medication is dry, cover with a band-aid or duct tape.
- Expect the skin of the wart to appear moist and white during treatment.
- If extreme redness, tenderness, or irritation occurs, take a break from application. Then, restart in 1-3 nights.
- Do not use this medicine on the face or groin area unless instructed to do so by your physician.
- Repeat these steps nightly until the wart is gone, which can take several months or longer.



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