

WARTS

Warts are growths that are caused by a virus infecting the skin.

There are several types of warts with different names based on their location. The **common** wart is found on the hands or body. The **plantar** wart derives its name from its location on the sole or plantar surface of the foot. **Venereal** warts or **condyloma acuminatum** involve the genital region and are often transmitted sexually. In females with venereal warts, periodic pap smears should be done, since these warts may cause cervical cancer.

Treatment of warts requires the destruction of the skin that harbors the wart virus. This is accomplished in a number of ways and is successful about 80% of the time. Because the wart virus can infect the normal surrounding skin while being unapparent to examination, it is not surprising that recurrence is frequent, which requires follow-up treatment. The most common treatments include the following:

1. Cryotherapy – Freezing the wart with liquid nitrogen is uncomfortable and results in a crust or blister which sloughs off in several weeks, carrying the wart with it.
2. Acid – Numerous acids are used to destroy the wart. These include salicylic, lactic, and trichloroacetic acids. Some acids are used at home (Compound W, Duofilm, or Mediplast) while others, because of their strength, must be used in the doctor's office.
3. Podophyllin – This chemical is derived from the May Apple plant. It can be very toxic and is used primarily in the doctor's office. A weaker preparation can be prescribed for home use.
4. Miscellaneous – Many other treatments have been used to cure warts, including cantharidin, radiation, bleomycin, interferon, and squaric acid. These methods are used when warts have failed to resolve with other treatments.
5. Surgery – Warts may be cut out or burned off with an electric needle or laser. Scars will result from the treatment.

For more information please visit our website: www.pennstatehershey.org/web/dermatology/home and click on Health Information Library.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your provider at the location you were treated.
Hershey Medical Center, UPC I, Suite 100 (717) 531-6820 or Nyes Road, (717) 657-4045.
Penn State Hershey Medical Group, Colonnade Building (814)272-4445.