

WART TREATMENT PATIENT

Wart(s), or *verruca vulgaris*, is a very common, benign skin condition caused by a virus, which affects most people during their lifetimes. Since warts are caused by a viral infection, your own immune system will typically clear the lesion on average from several months to 2 years. However, there are several technique/methods to making the wart(s) smaller in size or to help stimulate your immune system to clear the wart(s). Although wart(s) do not easily spread to others, the virus may still pass through direct contact (picking or scratching) and/or indirect contact (locker rooms/public showers).

The mainstay of treatment of wart(s) is to destroy the infected skin cells from the virus and to prevent recurrence. Your clinician would like to treat your wart(s) with:

Salicylic acid & Debridement

The first line treatment of warts is application of salicylic acid (with or without duct tape occlusion). Application of salicylic acid allows the wart(s) to stay flat and not callused. This allows other topical treatments to penetrate the skin better & to attack the viral activity of the wart. We recommend **Wart Stick** (available for \$8 at our office) or over-the-counter **Dr. Scholl's® Clear Away pads**. **Directions:** Apply the topical medication to the affected area and cover tightly with tape to occlude the lesion EVERY NIGHT after a shower or warm soak. Keep the medication on for 24 hours before removing/changing.

When the salicylic acid is removed from the affected area the wart(s) area should turn the skin white/softened. Use an **emery board** to rub off the softened tissue before changing a new salicylic acid application. Make sure you dispose the emery board and do **NOT** reuse on another site.

Cryotherapy or Freezing

Freezing wart(s) with a very cold substance (liquid nitrogen) is an effective & cost-effective treatment for common warts. The wart(s) are frozen off to kill the viral activity in and around the affected area. The treated areas will become sore and/or red for the next few hours. Some adverse reactions of this treatment include: pain, blisters, blood blisters, infection, and/or lightening or darkening of the skin.

At times, when the wart is too thick and/or callused, the clinician will shave/pare down the thickened skin prior to spraying the wart(s) with liquid nitrogen. This will allow the freezing to easily penetrate to the affected cell.

Aldara® Cream

Aldara® Cream is a topical medication that activates your own immune system to help attack the cells infected with the virus. The cream works for resistant or recurrent warts that do not respond to freezing and/or salicylic acid. The cream works best when wart(s) are softened (usually with salicylic acid-see above). **Directions:** Open the medication packet & apply to the affected area. Cover the lesion with a band-aid. The next morning, wash off the area with soap & water. Repeat as directed by your clinician.

Cantharidin (Canthacur/Cantharone)

Cantharidin is a chemical compound derived from a blister beetle. This liquid medication is applied to wart(s) in order to cause blistering, thus destroying the affected areas. At your office visit, application of cantharidin to the wart(s) is usually painless and the applied areas dry clear. **Three to four hours after cantharidin is applied to the warts, you must wash off the area(s) with soap and water.** Adverse reactions such as redness, tenderness, blistering, itching and burning sensations may occur within 2-3 days. It is expected to take 2-4 weeks for the treated areas to heal. Please follow up your provider in 6 weeks to reassess the treated areas.