



Warts and Wart Removal

Warts are caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). This is a variant of the virus that causes condyloma, or genital warts.

Common and plantar warts invade the skin after direct contact with either a carrier or the virus which maybe found on inanimate objects These usually survive in a moist environment. Incubation periods range from 1-8 months. 50% of all warts go away on there own spontaneously by the end of 12 months and 66% disappear within 24 months. During this time they can be very resistant to medical treatment.

Because of their location on pressure points of the feet, plantar warts show deeper tissue involvement than other warts. The hypothesis is that constant pressure of the body weight stimulates the inward growth of the wart. Therefore, the depth of these warts makes their treatment long and complicated. Plantar warts can cause excruciating pain with weight bearing activity, especially after a period of rest.

Common warts are frequently seen on the hand, and can also especially occur around the nail. Flat warts are seen commonly on the on the face, dorsum of the hand, and in groups.

Warts are transmitted simply by touch; it is not unusual to see warts on adjacent fingers or toes. Warts commonly appear at sites of trauma and from nail biting. Individual immunity plays a role in wart severity and duration, so warts appear more frequently and in greater number on persons who are immunosuppressed.

Newly developed warts and plantar warts have more virus particles than older warts. This gives them more ability to spread. Patients with new and plantar warts should cover the area with an occlusive dressing, especially in public showers. This will reduce the potential shedding of virus in a moist environment that is frequented by others. Shoe cleaning with alcohol, along with using removable cushion inserts are encouraged for prevention of plantar warts. Picking at the wart is discouraged because of the chance of spreading to other parts body parts.

Our method of treating warts involves the use of liquid nitrogen, which freezes the wart and destroys the tissue. This usually requires several treatments over a period of weeks or months.

Wart treatment appointments are made by phone or at the front desk with one of the registered nurses that have been trained to remove warts. The nurse will schedule any subsequent treatments in our wart clinic until the wart(s) are eliminated. Additional visits may be scheduled with a medical practitioner if warts are resistant to treatment.

The area of the wart may redden, swell, and/or blister after application of the liquid nitrogen. That is normal. If, however, you have excessive pain or any signs or symptoms of infection, (e.g. enlarging redness, increased swelling, area warm to touch, purulent discharge or red streaks, etc.) please call us for an appointment. Infection needs to be treated as soon as possible.

Genital warts need to be treated by a physician or nurse practitioner and we will be happy to refer you to one for your care.