



X-Plain™ *Warts*

Reference Summary

Warts are very common. It may be necessary to remove warts, especially if they are painful, bothersome, or if they multiply rapidly. This reference summary explains what warts are and how to remove them.

Warts

Viral infections of the skin cause warts. The virus that causes warts is called human papilloma virus, or HPV. It may take a few months after being exposed to the virus before a wart develops.

Warts are usually skin-colored, raised, and rough.

Warts usually show up on the fingers, especially in areas where the skin is broken, cracked or peeling. For example, people that bite their fingernails or pick hangnails tend to have a lot of broken and cracked skin.

Other warts occur on the soles of the feet. These are called foot warts. They are usually not elevated like common warts because of the constant pressure put on them while standing and walking.

Flat warts tend to occur in areas that are shaved frequently, such as men's faces and women's legs. Flat warts are smooth and not elevated like other warts. Many occur at the same time-- as many as 100 at a time.

Warts are not very contagious. They are more likely to occur in children who injure their hands repeatedly or bite their nails. Patients with weak immune systems are more susceptible to warts.

Removal Treatment

Not all warts need treatment. Warts on children may disappear by themselves over a period of months. However, adult warts generally do not. Warts may be removed if they are bothersome, unsightly, too numerous, or painful.



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The following are some of the available treatment options:

- application therapy
- cryotherapy
- electrosurgery
- laser treatment
- surgery
- immunotherapy

Application therapy involves applying different chemicals to the wart. One of the most commonly used chemicals is called salicylic acid. It comes in the form of gel, solution, or on a band-aid. This is an over-the-counter medication.

Cantharidin, another chemical, is painted onto the wart by a dermatologist. This causes the skin under the wart to blister, allowing the dermatologist to clip off the wart in the roof of the blister within a week to 10 days.

Since flat warts may be numerous, treatment consists of a chemical skin peel using medications such as salicylic acid, glycolic acid, or tretinoin.

Cryosurgery, or freezing, involves removing the warts with a very cold probe. This treatment is not very painful and does not usually result in scarring. Repeat treatments may be necessary before results can be seen.

For warts that are not responsive to the above-mentioned treatments, electrosurgery may be an option. Electrosurgery is when warts are burned with electrical current.

Laser treatments are also available to remove warts. For laser treatments the skin must be numbed. The wart is burnt using a laser beam.

Surgery is an option when nothing else helps. Other wart removal treatments include the injection of anti-cancer drugs into each wart. This can be painful and may have side effects. *Immunotherapy* is an option for wart removal. The body is made allergic to certain chemicals that are painted on the wart. This causes the body to attack the chemical and kill the wart at the same time. Another type of immunotherapy is the injection of a compound called *interferon* in the wart area. This chemical causes the body to have an immune reaction against the wart.

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Recently a novel approach to treat warts has been tried and has been shown to be very effective. It consists of covering the wart with duct tape for a total period of 2 months. This has shown results superior to cryotherapy.

The tape is changed every 6 days and left off overnight on the sixth night and reapplied the next morning for another 6 days. The process is repeated over a 2 months period.

Rubbing the wart every six days when the tape is off has resulted in the disappearance of the warts in more than 80% of the cases.

Summary

Warts are a very common condition. Simple applications of different types of chemicals are usually successful in treating and removing warts. More involved treatment options for removing warts are available and tend to give excellent results!

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