



Warts: What You Need to Know

Warts are caused by a viral infection in the skin. The human papilloma virus causes most of the warts we see: plantar, genital, periungual (on the fingers), and flat warts on other parts of the body. Molluscum contagiosum is caused by pox virus. These warts are small, but in children they can spread quickly. Untreated, they can take years to resolve. With some help below (and patience), we can cut that down to months, sometimes weeks.

Treatment

- Apply Compound W liquid or Dr.Scholl's pads. Hold treatment if bleeding or significant redness occurs.
- Alternatively, apply a piece of duct tape over warts at bedtime. Remove in the morning. Continue for two months or until warts resolve.
- After bathing or soaking, gently debride (rub off loose skin) warts with an emery board or pumice stone at least once per week.

Other alternatives your doctor may discuss:

- Liquid nitrogen (freezing) -- our preferred in office treatment
- Tagamet (cimetidine) -- for warts lasting over a year
- Aldara (imiquimod) -- for genital and other stubborn warts
- Retin A (usually used for acne) -- sometimes helps molluscum
- Referral to dermatology or podiatry. Other burning chemicals, electrodesiccation, or laser therapies may be considered.