



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

WARTS

Warts are skin growths that occur in 7 to 10% of the population. They usually appear first in childhood.

Warts tend to occur on parts of the body that are used the most and get hurt the most. This means warts occur most often on the hands, elbows, knees and feet. They may also appear on the face.

Where do warts come from? They are caused by a virus called the human papilloma virus (HPV) and are spread from one person to another. They may also be spread from one part of the body to another.

Should warts be treated? They are best left untreated in many cases because the body's own defenses will usually get rid of them. However, this often takes months to years. If the wart is painful, rapidly growing, involves a nail or if there are large numbers of them, it is best to seek treatment.

How are warts treated? The best methods of treatment cause irritation around the wart. Over the counter salicylic acid medicines (like compound W) are sometimes helpful. It is important to use those that contain 40% salicylic acid. If these do not work, your doctor may use liquid nitrogen to freeze them or may order a prescription cream applied once a day.

How do I take care of warts? The best time to take care of warts is at night before bedtime.

1. Soak the wart once a day with water to soften the skin. This may be in the shower or bath.
2. Use an emery board or pumice stone to gently scrape away the dead skin.
Avoid doing this on the face.
3. Apply the cream or salicylic acid medicine and cover with plastic tape or duct tape.
4. If your doctor has frozen the warts in the office and a blister forms over the wart, do not use any medicines until the blister heals.

Date: **Your doctor recommends that you use:**