

# Warts

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## Definition

- Warts are small raised growths that have a rough surface
- Viral infection of the skin

## Symptoms

- Raised, round, rough-surfaced growths on the skin
- Skin-colored or pink
- Most commonly occur on the hands, especially the fingers
- Not painful unless located on the sole of the foot (plantar wart). Also can be painful if on part of a finger used for writing.

## Cause

- Warts are caused by several human papilloma viruses
- Different types of warts are caused by different papilloma viruses

## Prevention of Spread to Others

- Avoid baths or hot tubs with other children. Reason: Warts can spread in warm water.
- Also, avoid sharing washcloths or towels.
- Contact sports: Warts can spread to other team members. Warts should be covered or treated.
- Time it takes to get warts after close contact: 3 months

# Care Advice

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## 1. Overview:

- Warts are common (10% of children).
- Warts are harmless and most can be treated at home.
- The sooner you treat them, the less they will spread.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

## 2. Wart-Removing Acid:

- Buy a wart medicine with 17% salicylic acid. There are many brands (Compound W, Duofilm, Wart-Off). No prescription is needed.
- Apply the acid once a day to the top of the wart. If there are many warts, treat the 3 largest ones.
- Since it's an acid, avoid getting any near the eyes or mouth. Also try to keep it off the normal skin.
- The acid will turn the wart into dead skin (it will turn white).

**3. Duct Tape - Cover the Wart:**

- The acid will work faster if it is covered with duct tape. Do not use regular tape.
- If you don't want to use an acid, use duct tape alone.
- Covering warts with duct tape can irritate the warts. This will turn on the body's immune system.
- Cover as many of the warts as possible. (Cover at least 3 of them.)
- The covered warts become red and start to die. Once this happens, often ALL the warts will go away.
- Try to keep the warts covered all the time.
- Remove the tape once per day, usually before bathing. Then replace it after bathing.
- Some children child object to having the tape on at school. At the very least, tape it every night.

**4. Remove Dead Wart:**

- Once or twice a week, remove the dead wart material. Do this by paring it down with a disposable razor.
- This is easier to do than you think. It shouldn't cause any pain or bleeding.
- Soak the area first in warm water for 10 minutes. (Reason: The dead wart will be easier to remove.)
- Some children won't want you to cut off the layer of dead wart. Rub it off with a washcloth instead.

**5. Prevention of Spread to Other Areas of Your Child's Body:**

- Discourage your child from picking at the wart. Picking it and scratching a new area with the same finger can spread warts. A new wart can form in 1 to 2 months.
- Chewing or sucking on them can lead to similar warts on the face.
- If your child is doing this, cover the wart with a Band-Aid.
- Keep your child's fingernails cut short and wash your child's hands more often.

**6. What to Expect:**

- Without treatment, warts go away in about 2 years.
- With home treatment, they can usually be cleared up in 2 to 3 months.
- There are no shortcuts to treating warts.

**7. Return to School:**

- Your child doesn't have to miss any child care or school for warts.
- There is only a mild risk that warts spread to others.

## Call Your Doctor Back If...

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- Warts develop on the feet, genitals, or face
- New warts develop after 2 weeks of treatment
- Warts are still present after 12 weeks of treatment
- You think your child needs to be seen

*This handout is intended for informational purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for the care and advice of a medical professional. The accuracy of the information contained in this handout is not guaranteed and there may be variations in treatment that your doctor or nurse may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.*

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