

## Education

### WARTS

A WART is a raised, round, rough-surfaced growth on the skin. They are most commonly found on the hands and feet. Warts are usually painless unless they are located on the bottom of the foot (plantar warts). Brown dots are often seen within the wart (unlike a callous) and it will have a clear boundary with the normal skin. (Barton Schmitt, MD, 1999)

- \* Warts are caused by papillomaviruses
- \* The word "plantar" refers to the bottom of the foot.
- \* Left untreated, most warts will resolve within 2 years, but can spread within this time.
- \* With proper treatment, warts usually resolve in 2 months, but may spread by rubbing during this time.

### HOME TREATMENT

- \* Topical wart medication: Salicylic acid (e.g. Compound W, DuoFilm, multiple store brands)
- \* Home treatment will not be successful unless it is done on a daily basis, first thing in the AM or at bedtime or both
  1. SOAK the wart in warm water for 3 to 5 minutes. This will soften the skin.
  2. SCRAPE the wart with an emery board to remove old, dead skin and expose the root of the wart. If done without pressure, this should not be painful.
  3. Use a circular corn pad exposing the wart in the center. This will enable the medication to stay centered on the wart not the surrounding skin.
  4. APPLY an over-the-counter WART MEDICATION (liquid) on the wart and cover with a loose band-aid.
  5. Repeat cycle (steps 1-4) every 12-24 hours until gone (often 4-6 weeks).
- \* Encourage the child to avoid picking at the wart, as this may cause it to spread.
- \* For plantar warts: child may participate in swimming with swim shoes.
- \* If there are only a few warts and painful then we may be able to remove (scrape) them in our office, followed by above treatment for about one week.
- \* The DUCT TAPE method has been shown to be effective; replace steps 3&4 with application of duct tape overnight and pull off aggressively in the morning.

The role of the Dermatologist or Podiatrist is reserved for those patients who have failed home treatment for 2 months or pain that is not subsiding with home treatment or office treatment. Cryotherapy (freezing off the wart) or oral medications are used by these specialists to remove warts. These are not one-time treatments. Cryotherapy requires multiple visits to a specialist. There are new home versions of this therapy that can be discussed.

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