

Common Types of Warts and What to Do About Them

Dermatology APRN Denise Gallo with SkinCare Physicians of Fairfield County, a division of Advanced Dermatology PC, with tips on understanding and treating warts

NORWALK, CT, UNITED STATES, November 3, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Warts](#) can be a

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Denise Gallo, APRN

nuisance, and sometimes painful, but they are usually harmless. These small, non-cancerous skin growths occur from a virus that infects the top layer of skin. Though usually not serious, the virus is contagious, which can cause warts to spread.

“Most warts eventually disappear without treatment,” says [Denise Gallo](#), APRN, a board-certified nurse practitioner with SkinCare Physicians of Fairfield County, a division of Advanced Dermatology, PC. “But many people choose to have warts removed because they find them bothersome, or have concerns about their appearance or spreading.”

What are the most common types of warts?

There are several different types of warts. The kind you have depends on what it looks like and where it appears on your body.

Common warts, also called verruca vulgaris, have specific traits. They usually:

- appear on fingers or hands, but can also affect feet, face, genitals, elbows, and knees
- are often skin-colored and rough to the touch
- have small, course bumps, or black dots that look like seeds (these are clotted blood vessels)
- are commonly located on cut or damaged your skin (e.g. from biting fingernails or picking a hangnail)

What causes warts?

The virus that causes warts is called human papillomavirus (HPV). It can spread more easily through a cut or break in the skin, which causes an infection. Children are more prone to getting warts because they often get cuts and scrapes. Warts also commonly appear where people shave, such as on their face or legs.

"It's also common for people with autoimmune disease or a weakened immune system to get warts because they are predisposed to the virus that causes them," says Gallo.

Warts can easily spread from one place on the body to another, or from one person to another. You can get a wart from touching someone's wart or from touching something the wart touched, such as a towel or doorknob.

"It may take a few months for you to notice a wart developing after coming in contact with one," notes Gallo.

What are the symptoms of a wart?

Warts, in general, can vary in appearance. They may be:

- flat or shaped like a dome
- rough or smooth
- skin-colored, brown, grey, greyish-yellow, or black

The symptoms of warts can resemble symptoms of other health conditions, so be sure to see a board-certified dermatologist for a diagnosis.

How are warts treated?

Many warts go away without treatment, especially in children. But some warts can be stubborn, according to Gallo. "If you have a weakened immune system, warts can be hard to get rid of," she explains.

Some people find over-the-counter or home treatments effective for warts. But if you have a wart that hurts, is bothersome, or is spreading, it's time to see a dermatologist.

To diagnose a wart, the doctor may:

- examine the wart
- scrape the top layer of the wart to check for signs of clotted blood vessels
- perform a biopsy by removing a small piece of the wart to examine in a lab

Treatment for warts depends on the type of wart, as well as age and overall health. The treatment will focus on destroying the wart, fighting the virus, or both.

The doctor may suggest:

- Cryotherapy (freezing) – Dermatologist applies liquid nitrogen to the wart, which causes a



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blister to form and then slough off. It may also stimulate the immune system to fight any virus causing the wart.

- Prescription medication – These most often contain salicylic acid, which slowly removes layers of the wart. It's most effective when combined with cryotherapy.
- Laser treatment - This treatment burns blood vessels and kills infected tissue, causing the wart to fall off.
- Electrosurgery and curettage - Electrosurgery involves burning the wart, and curettage involves scraping off the wart. They are often used together.
- Excision - This is when the doctor cuts out (excises) the wart.
- Immunotherapy - This treatment stimulates the immune system to help fight the warts. It's often used when other treatments aren't effective.

What outcome can I expect?

It may take several weeks or months for treatment to begin working on the warts. But even with treatment, you may find your warts begin to spread or come back. It may seem they return as quickly as the old ones disappear. They may appear in the same spot or in a new spot on the skin.

"This is because the virus that caused the wart entered your skin before you had treatment, causing new warts to grow," explains Gallo. "The best defense is to get any new warts treated as soon as you notice them."

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