



# Warts

*WARTS are NOT caused by touching a toad or frog!*

**WARTS** are skin growths caused by a **virus**. The human papillomavirus (HPV) virus stimulates the rapid growth of cells on the outer layer of your skin. There are more than 50 types of warts and they can be present on any part of your body, but most often seen on the hands and feet. Warts may appear as small, fleshy, grainy bumps that may be skin-colored, white, pink, or tan.



**COMMON WARTS** appear near the fingernails but can also appear on any part of the hand. Young adults and children are most often affected.

## PLANTAR WARTS

These warts appear on the feet and may have tiny black dots in them. These black dots are small, clotted blood vessels. While common warts are usually painless, plantar warts can be painful because they press inward when you stand on your feet. Common warts and plantar warts are not usually a serious health concern. Warts may disappear in a few weeks or last a long time. If they become bothersome, you may need to have treatment to have them removed.

## CAUSES

Warts can be acquired through direct contact with an infected person or contact with the virus on a surface, such as a shower floor. Usually warts spread through breaks in your skin. Not everyone who comes in contact with HPV will develop warts. Each person's immune system responds to warts, differently. Warts may develop from three (3) months to years after direct contact with HPV.

## TREATMENT

Warts don't necessarily require medical treatment. Up to two-thirds of them disappear on their own in adults or after use of an over-the-counter medication for removal of warts. Do not use OTC (over-the-counter) treatments for warts on the face or genitals.

## WHEN TO SEE YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

- If warts are on the face, genitals, or on your feet.
- If Over-The-Counter treatments fail or warts spread.

Your physician may suggest one of several treatments to rid you of warts:

**FREEZING** (cryotherapy) - Liquid nitrogen is used to freeze a wart. The dead tissue sloughs off when it thaws. It may take several treatments to rid you of the wart(s).

**MINOR SURGERY**—Your physician may use an electric needle (electrodessication and curettage) to cut away the wart.

**INJECTION**—Your doctor may inject medications into the wart to kill the virus.

## HOW TO REDUCE THE RISK OF SPREADING OR CONTRACTING WARTS

- **Avoid brushing, clipping, combing, or shaving over areas of your skin, where there are warts.**
- **Don't walk barefoot in public areas, such as pools and locker rooms. Wear shoes or sandals in public. Places to avoid coming into contact with the virus.**
- **Avoid using the same file or nail clipper on warts as you use on healthy nails.**
- **Don't pick at warts. Picking may spread the virus. You may want to place an adhesive bandage over the wart to discourage picking.**