



# Warts and Verrucas

## What is it?

Warts are small rough lumps that develop on the skin. Verrucas are a type of wart that affects the bottom of the feet. Warts and verrucas are caused by the HPV virus.

Most people will have warts at some point in their life. They're generally harmless and tend to go away on their own eventually, but this can take months or even years.

## Who catches it?

It is quite common at schools. Mostly children who have swimming lessons, gym etc. catches it.

## How is it spread?

Warts don't spread easily, but they can be passed on from person to person through close skin contact or contact with contaminated objects or surfaces, such as:

- towels
- shoes and socks
- areas surrounding swimming pools
- floors of communal changing areas
- You're more likely to get infected if your skin is wet or damaged. After becoming infected, it can take weeks or even months for a wart or verruca to appear.

## What are the signs and symptoms?

Warts and verrucas come in all shapes and sizes. They can affect any part of the body, but are more common on the hands and feet.

### Warts:

- tend to be round or oval-shaped (although some are long and thin)
- are usually firm and raised
- have a rough, irregular surface similar to a cauliflower (although some are smooth)
- vary in size, from less than 1mm to more than 1cm across
- can appear on their own or in a group

### Verrucas:

- develop on the soles of the feet
- are white, often with a black dot in the centre
- tend to be flat rather than raised
- can be painful if they're on a weight-bearing part of the foot



### What is the treatment?

Most Warts disappear without treatment, but can take up to 2 years.

They can be removed with over-the-counter treatments (various creams or Gels) or on prescription medication, but these can be time consuming, painful and don't always work. There is cryotherapy or electro cautery at clinics, which might help.

See your GP if the treatment haven't worked, you have a wart in your face, you have lots of warts or get frequently, a wart is bleeding, changes in appearance or causes pain.

### Can it be prevented?

While you have a wart or verruca, you should also take steps to avoid passing it to others. However it's difficult to prevent warts and verrucas completely, but the following measures can help stop them spreading:

- avoid touching other people's warts – wash your hands after touching your own wart
- avoid sharing towels, flannels, shoes and socks with other people
- keep your feet and hands clean and dry
- change your socks every day
- don't go barefoot in public places like communal areas and swimming pools
- cover warts and verrucas with a waterproof plaster or a verruca sock in swimming pools, changing rooms and gyms
- avoid scratching or picking at warts or verrucas – this may spread the infection to other parts of your body
- take care when shaving because warts can spread if you cut yourself
- Check feet for signs of verruca
- See Doctor if wart or verruca bleeds, changes shape or spreads

### What is the school policy?

A child should not be excluded from school, but please ensure verrucas are covered up.