



PODIATRY

# FootScope

A foot health message from  
Bayswater Allied Health

# Warts

## SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENT OF WARTS



Warts can appear on various parts of the body and are particularly common on the feet in the form of plantar warts — more commonly known as veruccas. Veruccas usually develop on the soles of the feet on in between toes and are more common in children, teens and people with lowered immune systems. Warts are contracted through skin-to-skin contact, and so areas such as surfaces around swimming pools and communal changing areas are danger zones when it comes to the spread of the virus.

### Symptoms:

Veruccas are can be recognised by their size, shape and texture and can be diagnosed by a clinician on sight with no testing required. They often have small black pin pricks in the centre of the warts, caused by constricted blood vessels.

Veruccas can be painful due to rubbing and pressure from the location of the warts on the delicate soles of the feet.

Side effects from veruccas include changed gait and walking patterns to accommodate the infection, thereby leading to muscle and joint problems. Movement changes can have wider impacts on the knees, hips and spine as well as on the feet.

### Treatments available:

**Salicylic acid:** if veruccas are painful, embarrassing, or simply aren't clearing up of their own accord, they can be removed with over-the-counter treatments containing salicylic acid. In small doses, these treatments are safe for pregnant women and can be effective to remove veruccas or other warts within 12 weeks. Salicylic acid can damage healthy skin, so stop using it if your skin becomes painful. Those with circulation problems should never use salicylic acid treatments, as healthy skin may be injured and go unnoticed.

**Duct tape:** while not strictly a clinical treatment, some studies have shown duct tape to be effective for the removal of warts when

applied to clean skin for a period of up to two months. The wart should be soaked and any rough skin removed with a pumice stone, with the skin allowed to breathe overnight before applying the duct tape for 6 days. The method should then be repeated until the wart has disappeared, and is usually effective within 28 days. The use of banana skins have also been reported with mixed results.

**Freezing and chemical treatments:** if you are concerned about a wart that will not go away, your podiatrist can prescribe a cream containing chemicals that will treat the wart or may suggest freezing the wart until it forms a scab that will eventually fall off. Freezing may take more than one session to be effective, and it can be painful, but it is a faster option for warts that are causing discomfort or embarrassment.

Veruccas are usually nothing to be concerned about and will go away on their own, but seek advice if you are

unsure that a lump is a wart. Your podiatrist will advise the most appropriate treatment option for your needs. Pay particular attention to a lump or wart that bleeds, changes colour or shape, or is painful. Wear comfortable shoes that avoid putting pressure on the wart. Shoes such as sports shoes, with a well-cushioned insole will help to prevent pain and itching. Seek medical attention if a wart changes shape, colour or causes pain. Always wear protective footwear in communal changing rooms to prevent contracting the virus or spreading the virus to others.



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