

What are warts?

Warts are small bumps on the skin that may feel rough when touched.

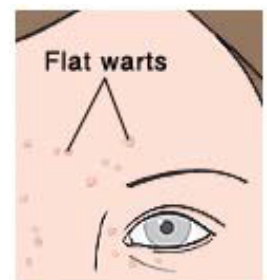
What causes warts?

Warts are caused by a virus that infects the skin. The infection can cause the growth of small skin-colored, rough bumps. These are called warts. Warts may be passed from person to person through contact (touch).

What kinds of warts are there?

Warts may grow on different areas of the body and may look or feel different in one area of the body than another area. A child may have common, plantar, flat, or genital warts.

- **Common warts.** These warts most often are found on the hands and feet. On the hands, they may grow:
 - Near finger nails.
 - On the fingers.
 - On the palms or back of the hand. They are often found in an area where the skin has been broken.
- **Plantar warts.** These are warts on the foot. They often grow on the sole or bottom of the foot. These may grow in a cluster and become very large. Warts that are on the soles of the foot do not stick up very high because walking on them tends to flatten them. This type of wart is much harder to treat because the wart is below the surface of the skin. An adhesive patch with medicine is often used to treat this type of wart because this method does not interfere with walking. Sometimes you may see black dots in a foot wart. These are tiny blood vessels.
- **Flat warts.** These warts grow on the face, arms, hands or knees of children. They are small and smooth compared to hand or foot warts. They are often seen in tiny clusters and there may be many of them in a cluster. Different ways of treating this type of wart may be used.
- **Genital warts.** These grow on the skin around the anus, penis or labia. These warts can be small, flat bumps or they may be large and thick bumps. They are soft to the touch and do not feel rough or scaly. Medicine put on the skin is used to treat this type of wart.



Why do only some people get warts?

A wart happens more often when skin has been damaged. For example, children who bite their nails and cuticles are more at risk of getting warts. A child may get warts after coming into close contact with someone else that has warts. If a parent has warts, the viral infection may be passed on to their child. Some people are more likely to get warts because their immune system doesn't fight this viral infection as easily.

How are warts treated?

Warts may go away without treatment. This may take many months or years. Warts grow in number and can be spread to others, so treatment may be needed. The type of treatment will depend on the age of the child, and the type of wart and where it is. Treatment may need to be done several times. Types of treatments include:

- **Topical Salicylic Acid.** Many weeks or even months of daily use are needed to cause the wart to go away. This medicine comes as a:
 - A liquid that is painted on the wart.
 - An adhesive patch that contains the medicine. The patch is put on the wart. This method is often used to treat (plantar warts because it uses a stronger medicine.
- **Liquid Nitrogen.** This is sometimes called freezing a wart. This treatment is normally used for older children. The liquid nitrogen stings when the doctor puts it on. This can be very uncomfortable. Sometimes freezing the wart may cause a scar or pigment changes of the skin. The wart may turn black, blister, or partially fall off within a few days after treatment starts.
- **Pulsed Dye Laser Treatment.** This is a special machine that directs an intense beam of light onto the wart. The treatment feels like a spark touching the skin. Hand, plantar and flat warts may be treated with this laser.
- **Candin® Therapy.** This is a therapy that causes the body to mount an immune response against the wart. The doctor injects the therapy directly into the skin.
- **Efudex® Cream:** This medicine is used for hard to treat warts. The cream is put on the warts at bedtime and covered with tape. Wart cells multiply faster than normal skin cells. Efudex prevents the wart cells from multiplying. With continued treatment, the remaining wart cells die as well.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.