

# Plantar Warts (Verrucae)

A wart (verrucae) is a growth in the skin caused by the *Human Papilloma Virus* (HPV). For this reason, your immune system is working to fight it off and eradicate it. It is also susceptible to *spreading* for the same reasons.

A 'plantar wart' is different in that it is on the bottom of the foot. This means two things: one, it is in thicker skin and is harder to treat; two, it is being pushed up into the skin (with walking) as opposed to a wart on the tip of your nose (nice thought!). This means it will hurt more than other warts!

Treatment options: If you decide to treat it, there are several different options, differing in the amount of time it take to treat as well as the amount of discomfort associated with the treatment.

1. Do nothing. If you just wait, many warts will go away on their own. This may take several months, and it could spread in the meantime.
2. Over-the-counter acids, like **Duofilm<sup>R</sup>**, **Compound W<sup>R</sup>**, **Wart-Off<sup>R</sup>**. These all have a salicytic acid in a suspension as do the patches. These need to be applied daily and scraped down every few days with a **callous scraper**. You should come see us every few weeks to evaluate and debride the lesion. This method may take several weeks or more depending on the depth of the lesions. The advantage to this method is that it causes the least amount of discomfort.
3. **Cantharone** is a medication we apply in the office. It is a **blister former** and requires nothing from you other than keeping it dry for 24 hours. It will form a blister which is peeled off two weeks after your initial treatment. Most or all of the wart will come off in the **roof** of the blister. This method is much quicker and more trouble free than the OTC acid preparations, but can come with a considerable amount of discomfort. In many patients it causes only minimal discomfort, but in some it makes it hard to walk on for a few days. On average it will take 2-4 treatments.
4. Surgical excision of the warts. This is an in-office procedure under local anesthesia which is great for very deep or stubborn warts. It is the only procedure in which you will leave our office knowing your warts are completely gone. Healing time means a bandage on the foot for 3 days without getting it wet. This is followed by daily soaking and application of a bandaid. In three weeks, there should be very little discomfort, and in 6 weeks the skin should be completely healed.
5. Options for treatment also include Liquid Nitrogen, laser treatments, Bleomycin injection and other topical agents. For some of these we will refer you out to colleagues who specialize in these treatments.
6. With all treatments, recurrence is a big factor. Our goal has to be 100% eradication of the lesions, otherwise it does not make sense to even start treatment.

Please feel free to ask our staff if you have any questions about treating warts.