

Warts (Viral Papillomatosis)

Cutaneous Medicine Education Foundation (CMEF) - Patient Education Handout

What Are They?

Warts are **benign skin growths** caused by the **human papillomavirus (HPV)**.

They can appear **anywhere on the skin**, but are most commonly found on the **hands, feet, and face**.

Common Symptoms:

- Small, rough growths
 - Can be **flesh-colored, pink, or darker**
 - Often have a **hard surface**
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Treatments

Warts are generally **self-limiting**, but treatments can help remove persistent or bothersome warts.

Destructive Therapy:

- Cryotherapy (freezing the wart)
- 40% Salicylic acid
- Trichloroacetic acid
- Laser treatment

Topical Medications:

- 5-Fluorouracil
- Imiquimod
- Tretinoin

Intralesional Treatments:

- Squaric acid
 - Candida, mumps antigen
 - Diphenylcyclopropenone
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When to Seek Medical Care

Medical attention is **not typically necessary**, as warts often resolve on their own.

Seek care if:

- Warts are **painful or bleeding**
 - Warts **interfere with daily activities**
 - You are uncertain about the **best treatment option**
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Helpful Resources

American Academy of Dermatology – Warts:
www.aad.org/public/diseases/a-z/warts-treatment

Citations

- Lipke MM. *An armamentarium of wart treatments*. Clin Med Res. 2006 Dec;4(4):273–93. PubMed ID: 17210977
- Gibbs S, Harvey I. *Topical treatments for cutaneous warts*. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2006;3:CD001781. PubMed ID: 15554732

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