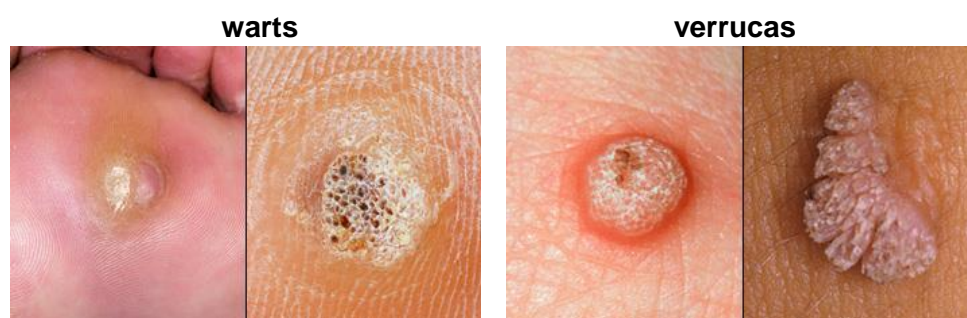


WARTS AND VERRUCCAS

What are warts and verrucas?

Warts are small lumps that develop on the skin. Verrucas are a type of wart that affect the bottom of the feet. 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. (Photographs courtesy of NHS Choices)

Warts can be spread around the body and to other people.



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.

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.

How to treat warts and verrucas

Most warts and verrucas will eventually clear up without treatment. Pharmacy treatments include:

- creams, gels, skin paints and medicated plasters containing salicylic acid – these burn the top layer of affected skin
- cold sprays containing dimethyl ether propane – these freeze the wart, but they're not thought to work as well as salicylic acid

There's not enough evidence to suggest applying duct tape to a wart or verruca works, so this isn't generally recommended. See your GP if a wart bleeds or changes in appearance.

Preventing warts and verrucas

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
- cover warts and verrucas with a waterproof plaster or a verruca sock when swimming
- 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