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## Plantar Warts

### Definition

Plantar Warts (verrucae plantaris) are contagious epithelial tumours caused by numerous types of human papilloma virus. Plantar means pertaining to the sole of the foot. As the name suggests plantar warts are found on the sole of the foot.

### Description

Plantar Warts are greyish in colour and, because of pressure are flattened on the surface in comparison to common warts. They are caused by a virus which sometimes takes up to a year before any obvious signs appear. Remember that the virus is very infectious, especially in moist conditions.

Some of the symptoms include the Wart being surrounded by raised skin which sometimes might be slightly swollen. These warts may be found as a single wart while at other times as a number together. These groups of warts are usually smaller, found close together and are called mosaic warts.

Plantar Warts are more common in older children and adolescents, but also occur in adults. Unlike ordinary warts, Plantar Warts may be very extremely tender and because they are found mainly on the load bearing area under the feet, make walking painful. Pressure on the wart causes it to be pushed inwards where the sensitive nerves in the skin are irritated. It is easy to tell the difference between a corn, a callous and a Plantar Wart. The ridges of skin on the wart are interrupted while on a corn and a callous they are not. Another difference is seen when the skin of the wart is pared, say with a sharp instrument such as a scalpel, pinpoint bleeding might appear. Small black spots appear on the surface.

Although more than 50% of Plantar Warts may suddenly disappear within 2 years, others, if untreated, have the tendency to spread and cause considerable discomfort. Several treatments can be prescribed however most cause some type of tissue damage.

### Suggested solutions

#### Natural

- » Vitamin A
- » Garlic



## Treatment options

As Plantar Warts are caused by a virus there are no specific products which will cure the problem. Your Doctor will suggest the correct treatment.

## Notes

Do not cut away the skin on the wart as it serves no real purpose and may only result in making the Plantar Wart area even more painful. Soaking the affected foot in warm water and then gently rubbing with a pumice stone may remove some of the dead skin on the surface. When disturbing the skin be careful to not infect the Plantar Wart.

## Pharmacist's advice

Ask your Pharmacist for advice.

- 1) Ask your Pharmacist for a **wart paint** containing podophyllin or salicylic acid.
- 2) If the wart is not too large use a piece of sticking plaster with a hole cut in it the size of the wart. Apply the wart paint as directed. Take care that no paint (in particular any podophyllin product) touches the surrounding skin.
- 3) Put another piece of plaster over the wart. Change 2 to 3 times a week or as directed by your Pharmacist. This will remove the dead skin on top of the wart.
- 4) If the diet is inadequate consider some supplements. Take Vitamin A for the skin and garlic for all round good health. Calcium has been suggested for warts as well.

## Reference sources

This topic was compiled from information supplied by Dr Kay Stewart B. Pharm (Hons), PhD, MPS, MACPP who is on the faculty of the Victorian College of Pharmacy, Monash University, Victoria, Australia.

DISCLAIMER : This information is an educational aid only. It is not intended to replace medical advice for individual conditions or treatments. Talk to your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or naturopath before following any medical regimen to see whether it is safe and effective for you.