

Safe ways to get rid of warts

Warts are noncancerous growths caused by a contagious virus. Common warts usually appear on the hands, and plantar warts appear on the bottoms of the feet.

Most common and plantar warts are harmless and will go away on their own with time. But, they may cause pain or embarrassment. As a result, many people would rather see them gone sooner rather than later.

Wart basics

If you're not sure whether you have a wart, it's best to see your doctor. Some skin cancers can look like warts.

You can get warts from other people or from touching a surface that had the wart virus on it. The virus that causes warts is known as human papillomavirus (HPV). Children and teens get warts most often, but they can happen to anyone.



Keep warts away

It's best to try and avoid getting warts in the first place. To help avoid warts, doctors say:

- Don't go barefoot in public showers, bathrooms, locker rooms, and around swimming pools. Wear flip flops or waterproof shoes.
- Don't share towels or personal items with others unless it has been washed.
- Wash hands regularly, including before and after eating, after using the bathroom, and after touching shared surfaces like doorknobs and ATMs.
- Finally, never pick at or scratch warts. This can spread the wart to other parts of the body.

Medicines for warts

There are a few ways to help speed the healing process for warts and get rid of them sooner. They include:

- **Wart medicine:** Look for one that contains salicylic acid as the active ingredient. This medicine helps peel the wart off gradually. It can be purchased in a liquid or gel you apply to the skin, or in patches that stick on the wart.
- **Wart freezing sprays:** An over-the-counter wart freezing spray can help get rid of warts. The spray blisters the wart and the skin around it, allowing it to fall off in a few days.

- **Duct tape:** Some studies suggest that applying duct tape to the wart may help it go away. Put a small piece of duct tape over the wart and change the tape every couple of days. This may help peel the wart off.

Be patient with any wart treatment. It may take several applications before the wart goes away. If these home remedies aren't working, talk to your doctor. Most dermatologists offer stronger wart removal treatments when needed.