

Warts & Verrucas

You have been given this leaflet because you have asked for wart or verruca treatment that you can get “over the counter” (OTC) from pharmacies, supermarkets and some other shops. After a local and national public consultation on OTC medicines, we do not prescribe wart or verruca treatment anymore.

Most people will have warts or verrucas at some point in their life. They're generally harmless and tend to go away on their own eventually, but this can take a few months or even years.

Warts are small lumps that develop on the skin. 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

Verrucas are a type of wart that affects the bottom of the feet.

How can I avoid/ suggested lifestyle changes

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
- How do I treat?
- Most warts and verrucas will eventually clear up without treatment. Pharmacy treatments include:
- creams, gels, skin paints and medicated plasters containing salicylic acid – these soften 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

How do I treat?

Most warts and verrucas will eventually clear up without treatment. Treatments (some restrictions may apply) include:

- creams, gels, skin paints and medicated plasters containing salicylic acid – these soften and remove 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
- **Speak to your pharmacist** - for advice if you're not sure which type of medicine is best for you and your symptoms.

When should I see a GP?

- you're worried about a growth on your skin
- you have a wart or verruca that keeps coming back
- you have a very large or painful wart or verruca
- you have a wart that bleeds or changes in how it looks
- you have a wart on your face or genitals

For more information

- Visit your local pharmacy for advice

Be self-care aware

Find out more about self-care at www.nhs.uk