

Combe Down Surgery

Information for Patients about Treatment of Warts and Verrucas

Warts are lumps on the skin that are caused by group of viruses called “Papilloma Virus”. They are very common and most people will have had one or more at some point in their lives. Verrucae are just warts found on the sole of the foot. They can be painful depending on where they are as well as being unsightly.

Even with no treatment nearly all warts and verrucae will go away with time as the body develops an immunity to the virus and clears the problem up naturally. This usually takes many months and most will go away after a year or two. There seem to be some unlucky people who still have them left even after this length of time!

Treatment of Warts and Verrucae

There are two ways of treating these- by sealing the wart or verruca for long periods with Duct tape or by treating with acid “Wart Paints”. Both these methods work by destroying the hard skin over the wart and then the virus underneath which is deep in the skin.

- Duct Tape

This amazingly simple method has recently been tested in clinical trials and found to be the most effective method we know.

What you do is get hold of some Duct tape- just the regular stuff you find in hardware stores. Any brand will do as long as it is tough and waterproof.

You then seal the wart or verruca under a piece of the tape large enough to completely cover it and stay on securely and leave it on for a week. Then take off the tape and the wart should have gone soft and flaky. Soak it in warm water and scrub off the dead skin as hard as possible.

The re-apply another piece of tape and repeat again.

If tape falls off during the week then just immediately replace it

The success rates are reported as 85% cure after 1 month , though some may take up to 2-3 months.

If it hasn't made any difference after 2 weeks then it probably isn't worth persisting.

- Wart Paints

These contain acid and burn through the skin. They are not painful as the hard skin on the verruca is dead. They need to be used every night (ideally) and may easily take up to 3-6 months before the wart disappears.

They can be bought from all chemists without a prescription. Some recommended brands are:

Glutarol
Salactol
Duofilm
Bazuka

For effective use:

After a bath or shower when the skin is soaked, rub the wart/verruca with an emery board or pumice stone to get rid of as much hard skin as possible. Special files can be bought from some chemists and the *Scholl* shoe shop.

Apply the paint over the surface of the wart taking care not to get it on the surrounding skin which may get irritated by the liquid. You can put Vaseline on the normal skin first to protect it.

Leave the paint on overnight and then rub the dead skin off in the morning.

Repeat this process daily or as often as you can.

PERSISTENCE IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS ! It may take a few months to get rid of it, but unfortunately there are no short cuts.

- Freezing or “Cryotherapy”

This treatment is where the wart is frozen with a spray of liquid nitrogen. This causes a freezing “burn” which is supposed to work by destroying the wart and skin tissue.

Despite popular opinion this actually isn't a very good treatment at all for warts and verrucas. Research shows that after 12 treatments cure rates are only about 50% (much less than for using paints or duct tape).

Along with the Dermatologists at RUH and most other practices in Bath, we have stopped getting in liquid nitrogen for special clinics as it doesn't seem to work very well.