



Warts and Verrucas

Patient information leaflet



GIG
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Common Ailments Service

Only use this leaflet if your pharmacist has advised you about your or your child's condition.

Warts and verrucas are small rough lumps on the skin. They are caused by a virus (human papilloma virus).

Warts are usually round and skin coloured. Most often, they appear on the hands and feet but they can develop anywhere on the body.

Verrucas are warts that develop on the soles of the feet. They may look flat because they get trodden in. Often, you will see black dots under the hard skin.

You may get 1 or 2 warts, or several warts may develop together. Although warts do not cause harm, they can be painful (especially verrucas), itchy and embarrassing.



A wart



A verruca



Treatment and Prevention

Warts and verrucas usually go away on their own in 2 to 3 years. You can treat warts if they are painful or bother you. Treating your wart or verruca may get rid of it sooner, but it will probably still take several weeks to go. The treatment can irritate your skin.

Medicines that can help

These medicines are not suitable for everyone. Make sure you have asked your pharmacist for advice about what treatment is best for you or your child.

You can use **salicylic acid** to treat warts and verrucas. It comes in different strengths and forms, for example as a paint, gel or ointment. Salicylic acid works by softening the outer layer of your skin, allowing it to loosen and shed.

Treatments containing salicylic acid can easily catch fire. Keep them away from flames, sparks and hot surfaces. Salicylic acid may also damage fabrics and other materials.

Use salicylic acid treatment until the wart or verruca has gone, but do not use Occlusal® for longer than 6 weeks. Do not use Bazooka™ Extra Strength, Salacto™ or Scholl™ Verruca removal System for longer than 12 weeks. If the skin around the area you are treating becomes sore, stop the treatment for a few days until it settles, then re-start it.

If the irritation is severe, or your skin becomes very red and itchy, you may have an allergy. Stop using salicylic acid and ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine.

If you are concerned about any side effects from a treatment, report it to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist. You can also report side effects on the Yellow Card [app](#) or [website](#).



Treatment and Prevention

Warts and verrucas can be **passed on** to other people or spread to other parts of your own body.

To stop warts and verrucas spreading:

- wash your hands after touching a wart or verruca
- do not pick or scratch your wart or verruca
- do not bite your nails or suck fingers that have warts
- change your socks every day if you have a verruca
- cover your wart or verruca with a waterproof plaster when you go swimming
- do not walk barefoot in public places if you have a verruca
- do not share shoes, socks and towels

You are more likely to get a verruca if your skin is wet or damaged.



When to Get Help

Contact your GP if:

- you have a wart on your face, your bottom, your genitals, or in areas where skin touches skin, such as under your arms or breasts
- you have a lot of warts or verrucas, or get them often
- your wart or verruca is bleeding, has hair growing out of it, or looks different to the way it looked before
- your wart or verruca hurts a lot or is making you upset
- salicylic acid is not working
- you have a weakened immune system, for example from cancer treatment or steroid therapy
- you have diabetes or poor circulation

If you are worried that your or your child's condition is not getting better, or is getting worse, talk to your GP.



More information

For more information on warts, verrucas, or a medicine, talk to your pharmacist or look at the following websites:

NHS 111 Wales: <https://111.wales.nhs.uk/Wartsandverrucas/>

Patient UK: <https://patient.info/skin-conditions/warts-and-verrucas-leaflet>

Medicines A-Z: <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/>

Information from the above resources is included in this leaflet.



Mae'r daflen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This leaflet is also available in Welsh.

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