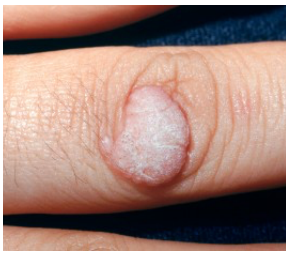
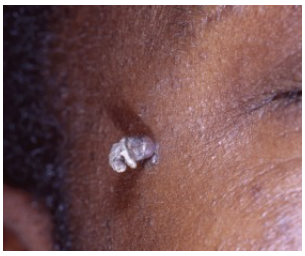
DOCTOR EDGES™

HAIR RESTORATION | DERMATOLOGY | AESTHETICS | WELLNESS

Warts





Warts, caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), are skin and mucous membrane growths. Common warts appear on trauma-prone areas like elbows, knees, and hands. They are usually painless and resolve on their own within months to years. Warts spread through person-to-person contact or self-inoculation via skin breaks. The virus can also transfer by touching objects used by an infected person.

Who's At Risk

Warts can affect people of any age, but they are most common between the ages of 12-16 years. It is estimated that 20% of schoolchildren and about 10% of the general population have warts. Warts can affect any race / ethnicity. People with HIV, organ transplants, or those who are on chemotherapy have a higher incidence of warts due to their weakened immune system.

Signs & Symptoms

Warts may occur singly or in multiples and often have what appear as multiple small black "dots" at the surface from tiny blood vessels.

- Common warts are rough, thick papules (solid bumps) ranging in size from 1 mm to over 10 mm, often on the hands, face, elbows, and knees.
- Filiform warts are long and narrow, like tufts of thread, and usually small at the base (1-3 mm); they often affect the face, eyelids, or nose.
- In lighter skin colors, warts may be pink, skin-colored, or light brown. In darker skin colors, warts may be pink, skin-colored, purple, brown, or gray.
- Warts can be covered with scale, which can be whitish, yellow, brown, or gray.

Self-Care Guidelines

Not all warts require treatment as they can resolve on their own, and treatment may not always be effective or prevent new warts. Treatment can be painful, cause scarring, and often needs repeating, so it should be reserved for warts that are highly bothersome or interfere with daily life.

- Over-the-counter wart removers with salicylic acid dissolve the infected skin layer and must be used daily but can irritate surrounding skin.
- Duct tape applied daily can help remove warts and should be left on for a few days at a time.
- Over-the-counter freezing medications are not very effective.
- Warts should be soaked in warm water, and loose skin should be removed every few days with a mild abrasive like a pumice stone.
- Family members should avoid sharing personal items such as towels.

When to Seek Medical Care

See a health professional if you have painful or bleeding warts, warts on the face, or warts that interfere with daily life and do not respond to self-care measures. If you have diabetes, warts on the feet should be treated by a health professional.