



Plantar Wart

Description

Plantar warts are warts of the sole, or plantar surface, of the foot. Since plantar warts are under pressure they grow inward causing pain. Plantar warts can be differentiated from a simple callus by characteristic dark specks (thrombosed capillaries) in the center (see photo). If shaved these punctate marks will show pinpoint bleeding. Plantar warts are caused by a virus (human papilloma virus) and as such are contagious. Dancers who go barefoot and gym users who do not use rubber sandals in the showers get more plantar warts.

Treatment

The ways to treat plantar warts are multifarious; most involve destroying the wart. No ideal treatment of plantar warts exists, but the following method of chemical destruction has worked well in our clinic. The treatment is fairly painless and will let you engage in normal activities. It usually succeeds if carried out according to instructions. You will be given a prescription that is to be used as follows:

1. At bedtime put the wart-destroying plaster (Mediplast) squarely on the wart.
2. After applying the medicine, cover your wart with fabric type adhesive tape supplied at the Student Health Pharmacy. This tape keeps your skin moist and enhances penetration of the medicine. There is no restriction on showering or swimming.
3. VERY IMPORTANT: LEAVE THE TAPE IN PLACE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. The longer the tape stays put, the better it destroys the wart. This advice is contrary to the package directions but we have found it works better.
4. After a few days the tape will start to come off. Remove the tape and note the outside of the wart is turning white. This is dead tissue. Also some of the wart may come off right on the acid plaster. Scrape as much of the dead tissue off as possible so that wart-destroying medicine can get at living tissue. A scalpel works best for this purpose. Minor bleeding may occur. Use simple pressure and reapply the plaster.
5. If the whole area becomes sore, stop the treatment for a few days.
6. If you see little progress after two weeks, return to the clinic. Stubborn or large warts may need more aggressive debridement by the doctor.
7. It can be difficult to tell when you are cured. Lack of discomfort is one indicator. Reappearance of the natural skin lines, the footprint, is another.
8. Rarely the acid in the plaster can cause an allergic reaction such as a body rash. Remove the plaster if you think you are having a bad reaction to medicine.

