

What Are Warts?

Warts are small, often rough skin growths caused by an infection with the human papillomavirus (HPV). That may sound serious, but in most cases, warts are harmless. They commonly appear on the hands and feet but can also develop elsewhere on the body.

The virus enters the skin through a tiny cut or crack, sometimes so small that you do not even notice it. Once inside, the virus causes skin cells to multiply more rapidly. The result is a visible thickening of the skin: a wart.

Although warts are usually not a serious medical problem, they can be annoying, painful, or bothersome, especially when located on the sole of the foot.

How Do Warts Develop?

Warts are caused by a virus. Infection usually occurs through:

- Direct skin contact with someone who has a wart
- Contact with contaminated surfaces such as swimming pools, showers, or locker rooms
- Sharing towels, nail files, or other personal items

Warm and moist environments are ideal breeding grounds for the virus, such as public swimming pools, sports halls, or communal bathrooms.

Children and teenagers are more likely to develop warts because their immune systems are still developing. However, adults can also be affected, especially when their resistance is lower.

What Types of Warts Exist?

Not all warts look the same. The most common types are:

Common warts

These often appear on the hands or fingers. They feel rough and sometimes contain small black dots (clotted blood vessels).

Plantar warts (foot warts)

These grow on the sole of the foot and can be painful when walking. Because they grow inward due to body weight pressure, they often feel like a small stone in your shoe.

Mosaic warts

Clusters of small warts that form a larger patch. They are most commonly found on the feet.

Flat warts

Small, smooth, and usually present in larger numbers. They appear more frequently on the face or legs.

Why Are Plantar Warts Often Painful?

Plantar warts grow inward due to the pressure of walking rather than outward. As a result, they press on underlying nerve endings, which can cause pain, especially when standing or walking.



Many people mistake them for a corn. The difference is that a wart often shows small black dots, and squeezing from the sides is usually more painful than pressing straight down.

If you are unsure, it is wise to have it examined.

Can You Prevent Warts?

Warts cannot be completely prevented, but you can reduce the risk.

- Wear flip-flops in public showers and swimming pools to avoid direct contact with contaminated floors.
- Dry your feet thoroughly, as moist skin is more susceptible to infection.
- Use your own towel and nail tools and avoid sharing personal care items.
- Avoid touching warts unnecessarily and never pick at them to prevent spreading.
- Maintain a healthy immune system to help your body control the virus.

Do Warts Disappear on Their Own?

Yes, they can. The body is capable of clearing the virus naturally, but this process can take months or even years. In the meantime, warts may grow larger, spread, or become painful.

For plantar warts, waiting is often not ideal, especially when they interfere with walking. The longer a wart is present, the deeper it may grow and the more difficult treatment can become.

Self-Treatment or Professional Care?

Pharmacies offer various wart treatments, such as topical liquids, salicylic acid patches, or freezing sprays. Some work well for early-stage warts but often require patience and consistent application.

What many people underestimate:

- The skin around the wart can become irritated
- Incorrect use can cause burns
- Not every thickened area of skin is a wart

If you are unsure or if the wart is painful, it is wise to seek professional advice.

A specialized foot care professional can:

- Accurately determine whether it is indeed a wart
- Treat the wart safely
- Reduce pressure to relieve pain
- Provide advice to prevent further spread

This is not only safer but often leads to faster results.

When Should You Take Action?



Do not wait too long if:

- The wart is painful when walking
- It grows quickly
- Multiple warts appear
- You have diabetes or another systemic condition
- Your immune system is weakened

For high-risk patients, self-treatment is not recommended. The skin may be more vulnerable, and wounds may heal more slowly.

Warts in Children

Children develop warts more often due to close contact at school, sports clubs, and swimming pools. They often disappear on their own, but sometimes they can be painful or bothersome.

It is important to teach children:

- Not to pick at warts
- To wash their hands properly
- To wear flip-flops in wet areas

If you are unsure as a parent, have it checked. Early intervention often prevents further spread.

How Does Professional Treatment Work?

This depends on the type and location of the wart. Possible approaches include:

- Carefully removing the upper layer of thickened skin
- Relieving pressure in plantar warts
- Applying specific treatment solutions
- Providing home care advice

Treatment is usually well tolerated. Sometimes multiple sessions are necessary, depending on the size and depth of the wart.

It is important to know that treating a wart does not always mean it disappears immediately. The virus resides in the skin. However, with the right approach, you reduce the risk of further growth and spread.

What Happens If You Do Nothing?

In some cases, little may happen. In others, a wart can:

- Grow larger
- Grow deeper



- Become painful
- Spread to other areas

Especially with plantar warts, this can affect your daily comfort. You may change the way you walk, which can lead to additional complaints. Prevention is always easier than treatment afterward.

Frequently Asked Questions About Warts

Are warts contagious?

Yes, they are caused by a virus and can be transmitted through direct or indirect contact.

Can you swim with a wart?

Yes, but cover the wart and wear flip-flops in wet areas to limit spread.

Can you cut off a wart yourself?

No. This can cause infections and promote further spread.

Is every hard spot under the foot a wart?

Not necessarily. It could also be a callus or a corn. A correct diagnosis is important.

Do Not Wait Until It Gets Worse

Many people wait until a wart becomes truly painful, until they start walking differently, or until they experience daily discomfort. That is not necessary.

From the moment you think, “This might be a wart,” it is wise to have it checked. The earlier you address it, the easier treatment usually is.

You do not have to live with it. You do not have to doubt. And you certainly do not have to wait until it becomes uncomfortable.

If you have an early-stage wart or are unsure about a spot on your foot, feel free to get in touch and have it professionally assessed. Together, we will determine what is needed to restore your skin to a healthy and comfortable condition.

Your feet carry you every day. Take good care of them — even when it comes to something small like a wart.

