

WARTS: Understanding & Treatment

A Pharmacist's Guide to Common Skin Conditions

What Are Warts?

- Common, benign skin growths caused by Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
- Viruses enter skin through tiny cuts or breaks
- Contagious and can spread to other body parts
- Self-limiting: 65-80% resolve within 1-2 years

Common Types

Type	Appearance	Location
Common Warts	Rough, raised bumps; gray/white/brown	Hands, fingers, elbows
Plantar Warts	Flat with inward growth; black dots	Bottom of feet
Flat Warts	Smooth, flat-topped; pink/tan	Face, arms, legs
Filiform Warts	Thread-like projections	Face (around eyes, mouth)

Treatment Options

✓ Over-the-Counter (OTC)

Salicylic Acid (17-40%)

- Most effective OTC treatment
- Softens and removes wart tissue layer by layer
- Available as liquids, gels, pads
- Treatment: 12 weeks typically

■ Cryotherapy (Home)

- Freezing spray (dimethyl ether/propane)
- Less effective than medical cryotherapy
- Multiple treatments may be needed

When to See a Doctor

- Genital warts (different HPV types)
- Diabetes or poor circulation
- Immunosuppression
- Wart changes color/bleeds
- Affects facial area
- Severe pain or infection signs

Prevention Tips

- Don't pick or scratch warts
- Keep warts covered with bandage
- Wash hands after touching wart
- Don't share personal items
- Wear flip-flops in public showers
- Keep feet dry
- Use waterproof plaster for plantar warts

How to Use Salicylic Acid:

1. Soak wart in warm water 5-10 min
2. File with pumice stone or emery board
3. Apply gel/liquid to wart (avoid healthy skin)
4. Cover with bandage or pad
5. Repeat daily or every 48 hours
6. Continue 12 weeks or until resolved

Your Pharmacist Can Help!

- Ask about OTC treatment options
- Get guidance on proper application technique
- Learn when to see a doctor
- Get product recommendations for your situation