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Common skin diseases and conditions




Medically reviewed by Reema Patel, MPA, PA-C — Written by Jon Johnson and Alina Sharon — Updated on November 14, 2023

[Lasting conditions](#) [Temporary conditions](#) [Skin cancer](#)
[Internal conditions](#) [Age-related conditions](#) [Summary](#)

Common skin diseases include eczema, psoriasis, acne, moles, fungal infections, and more. Symptoms can be similar between conditions, but the treatment will vary.

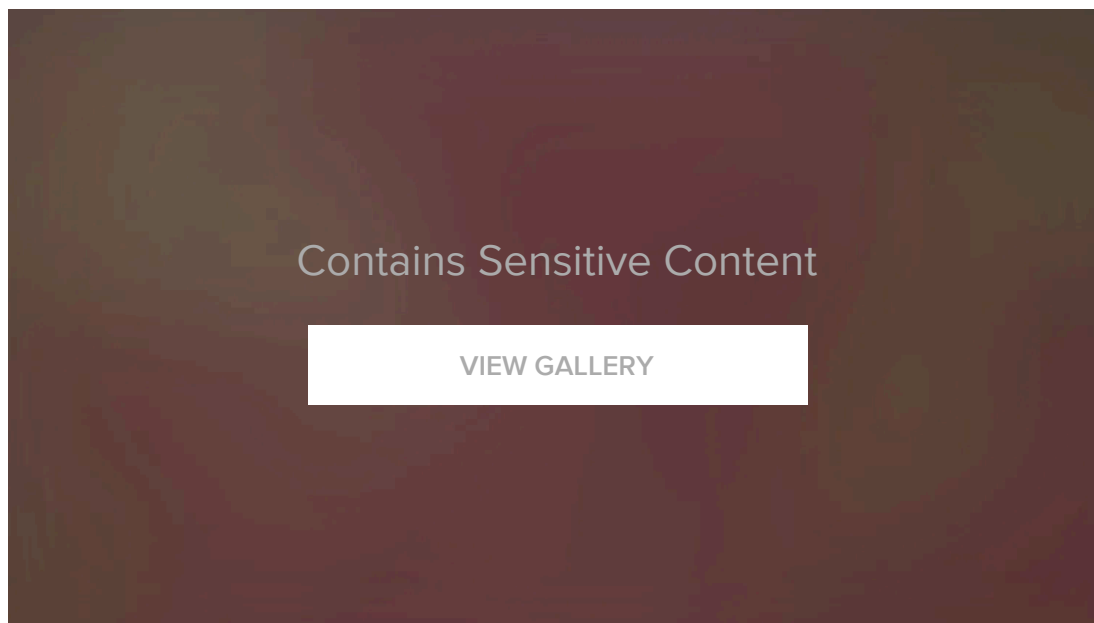


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Skin conditions contribute [1.79%](#)  of the global burden of disease worldwide. And the American Academy of Dermatology Association reports that [1 in 4](#) people in the United States have a skin disease.

While learning to tell one condition from another can help a person provide home care, it can be crucial to receive a diagnosis and treatment from a healthcare professional, such as a dermatologist.

Below are some common skin conditions, organized by how long they last, when they develop, and which areas they affect. When possible, we also describe how these conditions appear in skin of different tones.



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Lasting conditions

A number of skin conditions can last throughout life. Some may begin in childhood and continue into adulthood. In some cases, the symptoms are not always present but flare up at certain times.

Seborrheic dermatitis

In babies, doctors commonly refer to seborrheic dermatitis as “cradle cap.” Greasy, scaly patches form on the baby’s skin, [most commonly](#) on their scalp.

In adults, seborrheic dermatitis may appear anywhere on the body. It is prone to flare up and disappear throughout life. The affected skin may appear reddish, swollen, and greasy. And a white or yellow crust may appear on the surface of the skin.

Also, people with darker skin [may notice](#) that the scaling has a flower-like shape. Some areas of the affected skin may appear darker or lighter than usual.

Many treatments can help ease the symptoms. Treating seborrheic dermatitis [may involve](#) using special shampoo and applying medicated cream to the affected skin.

Moles

Moles are growths that form when skin cells bunch together with surrounding tissue. Most are called “common moles” and cause no harm.

Many people have moles, and a person may have as many as about [40 moles](#) throughout their body.

Check moles regularly for any changes in their appearance, such as an increase in size or change in color. Anyone who notices changes should let their doctor know so that they can screen for skin cancer.

Rosacea

Rosacea [most commonly](#) causes redness on the face. In people with dark skin, the affected area [may be](#) darker and warmer than surrounding skin.

There are [four](#) subtypes, and these can cause other symptoms:

- Erythematotelangiectatic rosacea may cause:

- redness
- visible blood vessels
- flushing
- Ocular rosacea may cause:
 - redness and irritation of the eyes
 - swollen eyelids
 - what looks like a sty
 - the sensation that something is in the eye
- Papulopustular rosacea may cause:
 - swelling
 - an irregular appearance
 - breakouts that may look like [acne](#)
- Phymatous rosacea causes:
 - thickening of the skin
 - a bumpy texture

There is no known cure for [rosacea](#). Doctors treat the symptoms with topical or oral anti-inflammatory medications.

Lupus

[Lupus](#) is a complex autoimmune disorder. It causes [inflammation](#) and pain, and the specific effects can vary from person to person.

Lupus can affect any part of the body. Symptoms on the skin [tend to](#) include red patches or rings, sunburn-like rashes on the nose and cheeks, and circular rashes that do not itch or hurt. These may accompany [headaches](#), [fever](#), [fatigue](#), and swollen, stiff, or painful joints.

[Nine out of 10](#) people with lupus are women, and women with darker skin are three times more likely to get it.

In addition, the symptoms in African American people may be more severe than those in other people. Understanding what causes this requires further research.

Treatments for lupus [include](#) medications and alternative medicine.

Psoriasis

[Psoriasis](#) is an autoimmune disorder. Symptoms [typically](#) include itchy patches of skin with an unusual appearance.

Areas of skin affected by psoriasis can vary in size and severity. In a person with white skin, the affected areas are typically red or pink with white scales. African Americans [may have](#) patches that are violet, gray, or dark brown. They may be more difficult to see.

There are five main types of psoriasis:

- Plaque psoriasis causes thick patches of skin.
- Pustular psoriasis causes [pustules](#) surrounded by skin that may be red.
- Erythrodermic psoriasis causes widespread areas that appear severely burned.
- Inverse psoriasis causes a shiny rash in skin folds, such as in the armpits or around the genitals.
- Guttate psoriasis causes small spots on the scalp, face, torso, and limbs.

Doctors can treat the symptoms with various medications, including creams and ointments. A dermatologist can recommend the most appropriate treatment plan.

Eczema

Eczema [usually](#) develops early in childhood, but it can arise in adulthood. There are several types, including atopic dermatitis and contact dermatitis.

[Eczema](#) may cause rashes on or around the face, scalp, elbows, neck, wrists, ankles, or legs. The rashes are very itchy and may become bumpy,

change color, or thicken. In adults, the rashes may cover more of the body, leading to widespread dry, itchy areas.

The symptoms may be [less noticeable](#) in people with darker skin, compared with those who have lighter skin. However, in People of Color, eczema [can cause](#) discoloration, making the affected areas lighter or darker. This may last, even after the eczema symptoms are no longer present.

There is no known cure for eczema. It may resolve on its own, but medications that relieve the symptoms are available.

Vitiligo

[Vitiligo](#) causes a loss of pigmentation. There are a few types, but vitiligo [generally](#) causes white patches to appear on the skin, usually in areas exposed to sunlight. People with vitiligo often lose their hair color early, as well.

Some people find that more areas of whiteness appear gradually, over many years. Since this condition affects pigmentation, it is typically [more noticeable](#) in people with dark or tanned skin.

There is currently [no cure](#) for vitiligo, but a range of treatments are available, including light therapy and topical medicines. A person also has surgical options, and some alternative therapies may help, though scientists need to look further into their effectiveness.

Temporary conditions

Some skin conditions resolve with time or with the right course of treatment.

Acne

Acne is one of the [most widespread](#) skin conditions. Symptoms can include:

- Pustules, which are [pimples](#) with [pus](#) at their tips.
- Papules, which are raised bumps that stem from an infection in hair follicles.
- Nodules, which are painful lumps beneath the surface of the skin.
- [Cysts](#), which are larger, painful, pus-filled bumps beneath the skin's surface.

Any person can get acne. People of Color [may also develop](#) dark spots, known as post-inflammatory [hyperpigmentation](#), as a result.

People can [typically](#) treat acne with medication. For females, this may involve hormonal therapy, in some cases. Light therapy may also be effective.

Hives

[Hives](#) are itchy, raised welts. They may be pinkish or reddish in people with lighter skin.

An allergic reaction is [usually](#) responsible, though [stress](#), illness, and friction, such as from tight clothes, can be the cause.

Hives typically form in clusters. They may go away in one part of the body and reappear in another. Treatment [usually](#) involves antihistamines or corticosteroids.

Warts

The [human papillomavirus](#), better known as HPV, causes [warts](#), which are contagious.

These bumps can appear on any part of the body, [typically](#) on the hands, feet, and joints. They tend to be the color of a person's skin or are darker.

Warts sometimes go away on their own, but a dermatologist may recommend removing them, depending on their type and location.

Fungal nail infection

This involves an overgrowth of fungus near, under, and around the nails. [Usually](#), it affects the toenails.

The nails' edges may crumble away, and their surfaces may have whitish-yellowish scaling and flaking.

Different types of fungi can cause this infection, and the treatment may depend on the type. Doctors can prescribe oral or topical medications. In some cases, they may need to remove the affected nail.

Cold sore

A [cold sore](#) is a red, fluid-filled blister. These blisters [usually](#) appear near the mouth, and the affected skin may feel painful or delicate. Before the blisters appear, there may be itchiness or a burning sensation.

The [herpes](#) simplex virus causes cold sores, which may last for up to [2 weeks](#), then return periodically. While there is no cure, various treatments can reduce outbreaks.

Candidiasis

The overgrowth of the *Candida albicans* fungus causes this issue, and when it affects the skin, it is called cutaneous Candidiasis or cutaneous Moniliasis.

The areas may be irritated and have lesions or small pustules. Candidiasis [typically](#) develops in skin folds, such as the armpit or around the groin. Sometimes, it affects the face.

People can usually prevent [Candidiasis](#) by boosting their skin hygiene and avoiding the overuse of [antibiotics](#). To treat it, doctors may prescribe antifungal and corticosteroid creams.

Athlete's foot

Athlete's foot is a fungal infection. The fungus responsible thrives in warm, damp conditions, such as inside sneakers.


Symptoms may include dry, itchy, peeling skin. There can also be blisters and bleeding, and the skin between the toes or under the foot may be soggy, pale, cracked, or scaly.

Doctors [usually](#) treat athlete's foot with antifungal creams or sprays.

Skin cancer

Cancer involves cells growing uncontrollably, and it can happen anywhere. When it begins in the skin, doctors call it skin cancer. Although skin cancer can be life threatening, treatments can be effective if a doctor diagnoses the issue early.

These cancers tend to occur after prolonged exposure to the sun. Darker skin produces more melanin, which gives the skin more protection from harmful sun rays.

Still, [research](#)  shows that skin cancer tends to be diagnosed later in People of Color. This results in delayed medical care and a higher likelihood of death.

There are several types of skin cancer, and some are more common than others.

Basal cell carcinoma

This is the [most common](#) kind of [skin cancer](#). It typically develops on the neck, arms, or head but can affect any area of the body.

In a person with lighter skin, [basal cell carcinoma](#) may appear as a pink, round bump or patch. In someone with darker skin, the bump may be brown or black and [may look](#) like a common mole.

Squamous cell carcinoma

This is the [second](#) most common type of skin cancer. It often forms from dry, scaly patches called actinic keratoses. If a doctor does not detect squamous cell carcinoma early, it may grow deeper into the skin and cause disfigurement.

People with lighter skin [tend to](#) develop this cancer in areas often exposed to the sun. People with darker skin tend to develop it on the legs, genitals, and anus.

It is a good idea to let a doctor know about any lesion that grows, changes, bleeds or looks unusual in any other way.

Melanoma

[Melanoma](#) is the [most serious](#) of the skin cancers because it spreads most easily to other parts of the body. It can develop from a mole or another pigmented area of skin. If any mole is asymmetrical, has ragged edges or an uneven color, or changes in size, let a doctor know.

In people with darker skin, melanoma may be harder to see, so checking carefully is especially important. Remember to include the toenails and fingernails, as this type of cancer is [more common](#) in these areas for People of Color.

A person with melanoma may need surgery, [chemotherapy](#), or radiation treatment.

[Learn more about the different types of skin cancer and their treatments.](#)

Internal conditions

Some skin conditions occur within the deeper layers of the [skin](#).

Carbuncle

When *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria make their way into the hair follicles and cause an infection, it can result in a [carbuncle](#). This is an irritated lump beneath the skin that may be red and will have a white or

yellow center. The pus within may ooze out, or there may be a crust over the lump.

Carbuncles can fill with pus and swell quickly. Other symptoms include tiredness, itchiness of the lump, and a fever.

Doctors [usually](#) treat carbuncles with antibiotics, drainage, and antibacterial washes.

Cellulitis

Cellulitis is a bacterial infection in the deeper layers of the skin. It develops quickly and can spread rapidly throughout the body.

The affected skin may be red, swollen, hot, and painful or tender. Cellulitis is [most common](#) in the legs but can occur anywhere in the body.

Severe cellulitis may be life threatening, and the treatment [generally](#) involves antibiotics.

Age-related conditions

Certain skin conditions are more likely to develop during specific times of life.

In children

Impetigo and measles are just two conditions that are more common during childhood. Learn about these and others below.

Hemangiomas

Hemangiomas are harmless tumors that usually appear on the neck, head, or face of infants. They begin as small scratches or bumps that eventually bulge out and become larger growths.

They can also form on organs other than the skin, and they are common on the liver. Hemangiomas tend to disappear on their own by the age of [10 years](#). A person may elect to have them removed.

Measles

[Measles](#) is a highly infectious, airborne viral illness. In the U.S., the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine protects [most people](#) from getting the disease. But babies who are too young to be vaccinated, pregnant people, and others without the vaccine are susceptible to it.

One symptom of measles is a red or brown rash that spreads down the body. Other symptoms include a fever, watery eyes and a runny nose, a cough, and small reddish spots inside the mouth.

There is no cure, so doctors tend to address the symptoms and monitor to prevent complications.

Impetigo

This contagious bacterial infection is one of the [most common](#) skin infections in young children. It usually causes itchy sores and blisters to appear around the mouth and elsewhere on the face.

These sores then burst and leave a crust. The crust dries and leaves a red mark that fades without scarring. Treatment usually involves an antibiotic.

Dermatomyositis

Dermatomyositis is a rare inflammatory skin disease that is most common in children aged [5–15 years](#) and adults aged 40–60 years.

Common symptoms include a red-to-purple rash on the chest, face, nails, or elbows, as well as muscle weakness and swelling. There is no cure, but treatments can help manage the symptoms.

Some research suggests that African Americans may be developing dermatomyositis at [three times](#) the rate of white people in the country.

In adults

The likelihood of developing one of the following conditions increases with age.

Shingles

People can get [shingles](#) from the varicella-zoster virus, which also causes [chickenpox](#). When a person recovers from chickenpox, usually in childhood, the virus stays in their body and moves to the nerves. At some point later in life, it can reactivate and cause shingles. This most commonly occurs in older adults.

It starts with a painful sensation, and within [2 days](#), a reddish, widespread, blistering rash develops. On people with darker skin, the rash [may be](#) harder to see. Antiviral treatment within the first 48 hours of the rash developing can help limit the accompanying pain.

A vaccine is available [to prevent](#) shingles, and older adults should ask a doctor about having one.


Seborrheic keratosis

These [harmless](#) bumps commonly appear with age. They may be black, dark brown, or yellow, and they may form a bumpy patch of skin.

It is not always easy to distinguish between seborrheic keratoses and skin cancer, so a doctor will test to make sure.

People may opt to remove seborrheic keratoses with cryotherapy or electrosurgery.

Age spots

Age spots, or liver spots, are flat and have more pigment than the surrounding skin. People with lighter skin [usually](#)  get them after exposure to the sun over the years.

People with darker skin develop age spots when an environmental trigger causes their skin to produce more melanin. The cause [may be](#) a healing wound, a pimple, hormonal changes, or irritation from a skin care product.

These spots require no treatment, but a person can elect to have them removed.

Summary

Some skin conditions are harmless, while others can cause discomfort and distress, among other symptoms. It is important to remember that no one has to deal with their skin issues alone. Teaming up with a doctor, such as a dermatologist, can help ensure a correct diagnosis the best possible treatment plan.

Dermatology Lupus Psoriasis Melanoma / Skin Cancer

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How to treat a wart



Medically reviewed by Debra Sullivan, Ph.D., MSN, R.N., CNE, COI — Written by Yvette Brazier — Updated on January 11, 2024

Treatment Types Causes Home remedies Prevention

Summary

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A wart is a small growth that can appear anywhere on a person's body. Treatment options for warts include topical remedies, surgery, and antibiotics.

The [human papillomavirus](#) (HPV) family causes warts. These growths can appear anywhere on the body and are transmissible through touch. There are more than [100 types](#) of HPV.

As many as [one-third](#) of children and teenagers are estimated to have warts, but only 3–5% of adults. People with a weakened immune system are [at a higher risk](#) for contracting an HPV strain leading to warts.

In this article, we discuss the various types of warts and how a person can treat them.

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Treatment



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Most warts clear up without treatment. But the time it takes a wart to disappear can vary.

The location and type of wart and the strength of a person's immune system will all affect how long a wart will take to disappear.

This may happen within weeks or months of warts becoming visible but can take [several years](#) ✓ in some cases. [Two-thirds](#) ✓ of warts remedy within 2 years.

But if they do not disappear, or if a wart causes concern, medical help is available.

What treatments are available?

Before deciding on treatment, a doctor will typically examine the wart, ask about family history, and may take some tissue for tests.

Salicylic acid

A person may be able to [treat their warts](#) at home with [salicylic acid](#). This is available over the counter (OTC) as creams, gels, paints, and medicated dressings. A person will typically have to apply salicylic acid [daily](#) ✓ for several weeks or even months.

In controlled medical settings, solutions with high concentrations of salicylic acid have been successful in clearing [62.7–86.5%](#) of warts. OTC treatments are usually of lower strength, but may still be beneficial.

It is important to protect the skin around the wart before applying this treatment, as salicylic acid may destroy healthy skin. In addition, a person should not apply salicylic acid to their face.

[There is a selection of salicylic acid treatments available for purchase online.](#)

Cryotherapy

In [cryotherapy](#), liquid nitrogen is sprayed or applied onto the wart, [destroying](#) the cells. A blister will then develop, scab over, and eventually fall off.

A healthcare professional must carry out cryotherapy. It is [common](#) for a person to need repeat treatments.

Surgery

It is uncommon for a doctor to recommend surgery for warts. Typically, a person will only undergo surgery if all other treatment options have proven ineffective.

Surgical options for removing warts [include](#):

- **Excision:** A doctor will cut or shave off a wart under local anesthesia.
- **Electrosurgery:** This procedure burns wart tissue with an electric implement.
- **Laser treatment:** A doctor will use a high-powered laser device to destroy wart tissue and remove any remains.

Surgical options can leave visible marks, whereas warts that disappear naturally do not leave scars.


Cantharidin

A doctor may apply cantharidin and other chemicals to warts.

This is painless, but it [creates a blister](#) that may be uncomfortable. As this blister forms, it lifts the wart from the skin. The doctor will then remove the dead part of the wart.

Candida antigen shots

Doctors can inject an extract of [Candida albicans](#), an infectious yeast, into a wart. The person's immune system will recognize the infection and attack the site.

Candida antigen shots can result in the total removal of warts. But the efficacy of the treatment can vary. A review found that success rates of wart removal can range between [39–87%](#) .

Other treatments

If warts do not respond to standard treatments, a dermatologist, or skin specialist, may offer [other options](#).

- Bleomycin, or Blenoxane, an anticancer medication, can be injected into the wart.
- Chemical peels can help remove flat warts.
- [Antibiotics](#) are only effective in the case of infection.

Common warts, especially around the fingernails and toenails, may be difficult to eliminate completely or permanently.

Types

The following are common types of warts.

Common warts (*verruca vulgaris*)


Common warts have a firm, raised, rough surface and may appear cauliflower-like.

They can occur anywhere, but they are [most common](#) on the fingers, near the nails, and on any area with broken skin.

Clotted blood vessels are often visible in common warts as small, darkened spots.

Plantar warts

[Plantar warts](#), or verrucas, appear on the soles of the feet, heels, and toes.

They [usually](#)  grow into the skin because the person's weight pushes onto the sole of the foot. They typically have a small central black dot surrounded by hard, white tissue. Plantar warts are often difficult to clear.

Plane warts (*verruca plana*)

Plane warts are round, flat, and smooth. They can be yellowish, brownish, or the color of the person's skin.


Also known as flat warts, they grow most often in sun-exposed areas.

They tend to grow in larger numbers, sometimes between [20–100](#) at once.

Filiform warts (*verruca filiformis*)

Filiform warts are long and thin in shape. They can grow rapidly on the face, neck, and eyelids.

Mosaic warts

Mosaic warts are multiple plantar warts in a single cluster. They [typically occur](#)  under the toes and on the balls of the feet, but can spread across the foot.

When to contact a doctor

People should contact a doctor if a wart:

- causes pain
- bleeds easily
- changes appearance
- spreads easily to other parts of the body
- comes back after past removal

Individuals who want a wart removed for cosmetic reasons should also contact a doctor.

Causes

HPV causes the excessive and rapid growth of keratin, which is a hard protein on the top layer of the skin. This results in warts forming.


Different HPV strains cause different warts. These strains can transmit through close skin-to-skin contact and contact with items recently exposed to HPV.

The virus can spread to other parts of the body [through](#):

- scratching or biting a wart
- sucking fingers
- biting fingernails, if there are warts around the nails
- shaving the face or legs

Having wet or damaged skin, such as a cut or scrape, [increases](#) the risk of infection.

For example, a person with cuts on their feet is more likely to develop a verruca from visiting public swimming pools.

The transmission risk of warts is low in adults and higher in children and infants. People with a compromised or suppressed immune system have a [higher risk](#)  for contracting an HPV strain leading to warts.

People who work with raw meat, such as butchers, also have a higher risk for developing warts.

Genital warts

Some strains of HPV can cause warts on, in, or around the genitals.

While genital warts themselves are not harmful, they can significantly impact a person's quality of life and transmit through intercourse.

Other transmissible HPV strains [can lead](#) ✓ to cervical, anal, penile, and vulvovaginal cancer. But these are not the strains that cause genital warts, although a person may carry and transmit [multiple strains](#) ✓ at once.

Anyone who develops genital warts should contact their doctor for assessment.

Home remedies

A person with warts may be able to treat them at home.

Warts typically disappear independently, so maintaining good hygiene and helping prevent further infection is an important first step in self-remedies.

Products containing salicylic acid are available for home use. A person may be able to treat warts effectively using OTC products.

Some people may recommend [other remedies](#), such as putting duct tape on warts and certain forms of hypnosis. But these remedies are purely anecdotal and have no medical benefit nor support.

If a person is worried about their warts, they should contact their doctor.

Prevention

A person can help reduce [their risk](#) for catching or spreading warts.

Some rules to follow include:

- Do not touch other people's warts.

- Do not use other people's towels, washcloths, or other personal items.
- Do not share shoes or socks with other people.
- Do not scratch warts or verrucae.
- Wear sandals when entering and exiting communal showers and pools.
- Do not brush, comb, shave, or clip hair in areas that have warts.
- When filing or cutting nails, do not use the same utensil on the infected nail and the healthy nails.
- Keep hands as dry as possible.
- Wash hands thoroughly after touching a wart.

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Summary

Warts are abnormal growths on the skin. They occur when an HPV strain infects the skin and causes rapid cell growth. Warts are common and often harmless, but they may lead to feelings of embarrassment.

Warts can occur anywhere on the body and can appear as hardened lumps, flat circular patches, or thread-like protrusions. They typically heal and disappear on their own, but surgical options are available for faster removal.

Treatment options may involve applying salicylic acid, cryotherapy, laser treatment, immunotherapy, electrosurgery, and excision.

Dermatology Infectious Diseases / Bacteria / Viruses

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