

# Warts & Genital Warts

(Common viral skin growths caused by HPV)

## What Are Warts?

Warts are common benign skin growths caused by certain strains of the **Human Papillomavirus (HPV)**. The virus infects the outer layer of the skin and can cause rough or smooth bumps to develop.

### Warts are:

- Very common
- Usually harmless
- Contagious through skin contact
- Sometimes stubborn or recurrent

Warts are **not cancer**, but they can spread to other areas of your skin or to other people through contact.



## Types of Warts

### Common Warts

Usually found on:

- Fingers
- Hands
- Knees

They often appear rough and raised.

## Plantar Warts

Occur on the soles of the feet and may:

- Feel painful when walking
- Grow inward due to pressure
- Develop black pinpoint dots

## Flat Warts

Small smoother warts often found on:

- Face
- Arms
- Legs

## What Are Genital Warts?

**Genital warts** are caused by certain HPV strains affecting the genital or anal area.

They may appear as:

- Small flesh-colored bumps
- Soft raised growths
- Clusters resembling cauliflower-like bumps

Genital warts are considered a **sexually transmitted infection (STI)**.

## How Do Warts Spread?

Warts spread through:

- Skin-to-skin contact
- Shared surfaces or personal items
- Small skin breaks
- Sexual contact (genital warts)

The virus spreads more easily in:

- Warm moist environments
- Locker rooms
- Shared showers
- Areas of friction or shaving

# How Are Warts Diagnosed?

Diagnosis is usually made during a skin examination.

Occasionally biopsy may be recommended if:

- The lesion is unusual
- Treatment fails
- The diagnosis is uncertain

# How Are Warts & Genital Warts Treated?

Treatment depends on:

- Location
- Size
- Number of lesions
- Patient preference

## Common treatment options:

- **Cryotherapy (liquid nitrogen)**
- Prescription topical medications
- Cantharidin in selected cases
- Curettage or removal
- Immune-stimulating therapies for stubborn warts

Genital wart treatment may involve:

- Topical medications
- Cryotherapy
- Minor procedural removal

Multiple treatments are often needed.

# Pre-Op Instructions

*(Before wart treatment)*

- Do not cut or shave over warts.
- Avoid picking or scratching lesions.
- Tell us if you:
  - Have diabetes
  - Have poor circulation
  - Are immunocompromised
  - Are pregnant
  - Previously used wart treatments

For genital warts:

- Avoid applying irritating products before the visit.
- Avoid sexual contact if lesions are inflamed or irritated.

## Post-Op Instructions

*(After cryotherapy or wart treatment)*

### What's normal

- Redness
- Swelling
- Blistering
- Crusting or scabbing
- Mild soreness

### Aftercare

- Keep the area clean.
- Avoid picking blisters or scabs.
- Cover irritated areas with a bandage if needed.
- Use medications exactly as prescribed.

### Call the office if

- Severe pain develops
- Signs of infection occur
- Fever develops
- Significant swelling or drainage occurs

## Warts & Genital Warts FAQ

### Are warts contagious?

Yes. Warts can spread through skin contact and shared surfaces.

### Are genital warts caused by HPV?

Yes. Genital warts are caused by certain strains of Human Papillomavirus (HPV).

### Can warts go away on their own?

Sometimes, especially in children, but some persist for months or years.

### **Do all HPV infections cause cancer?**

No. Most wart-causing HPV strains are low-risk and do not cause cancer.

### **Can genital warts recur after treatment?**

Yes. HPV can remain in the skin even after visible warts are treated.

### **Is the HPV vaccine helpful?**

HPV vaccination helps protect against several HPV strains, including some associated with genital warts and certain cancers.

### **Why do warts require multiple treatments?**

The virus lives within skin cells, and repeated treatment often helps stimulate the immune system to clear the infection.

### **Will wart treatment leave scars?**

Scarring is uncommon but can occur, especially after aggressive treatment or picking.