

## Common Warts (non-genital)

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### Description

A common wart is a harmless skin growth caused by a non-cancerous type of human papillomavirus (HPV). There are more than 100 known types of HPV. HPV infects the top layer of skin, usually entering the body in an area of broken skin. The virus causes the top layer of skin to grow rapidly, resulting in a wart. Many warts generally go away within months without treatment. They can occur anywhere on the body. They are most common among children and young adults. Warts are the most common type of skin infection.

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### Symptoms

Small bumps of hardened skin (fleshy growths) which normally appear on the hands, feet and face are characteristic. They can be single or clusters and can have varied appearance, although they often have black dots. They also can appear as elevated bumps, smooth bumps or they can be invisible to the naked eye.

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### Transmission

Warts are transmitted by touch, and it is not unusual to see them adjacent to each other. It usually takes from one to six months after transmission for warts to begin to appear, but it occasionally takes years after exposure.

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### Diagnosis

Common warts usually occur on your hands, fingers, near your fingernails, or on the soles of the feet. A medical provider almost always makes the diagnosis of warts based on visual inspection of your skin.

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### Treatment

Although there is no cure for HPV, most cases of common warts are temporary and clear without medical intervention. Some types of warts respond quickly to routine therapy, whereas others are resistant. Most warts will require more than one treatment for successful removal.

Methods of treatment available at SDSU Student Health Services include:

Cryosurgery - is the freezing of warts, usually by the application of liquid nitrogen.

Salicylic Acid - is available in solution or incorporated into a pad (Mediplast) and is applied directly onto the wart daily. This may require multiple treatments.

Trichloroacetic Acid - can be applied to the wart.

Surgical excision or electrocautery (gentle burning) - may be necessary in some cases.

Post treatment discomfort is common. There is also a small risk of scarring, discoloration of the skin, local nerve injury and infection.

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### For More Information:

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