

# Plantar Warts

## What causes plantar warts?

Plantar warts are ordinary warts of the sole, or plantar surface, of the foot. Since plantar warts are on a pressure area, they grow inward and are often tender and painful. Like other warts, plantar warts are caused by a virus and are harmless.

## Treatment

There are many ways of treating plantar warts. All involve destroying the warts. So far we don't have a perfect treatment for plantar warts. I prefer to treat plantar warts by destroying them chemically. This treatment is painless and minimizes the risk of producing a painful scar on the foot. It usually succeeds if carried out according to instructions. It will take several weeks or months.

Liquid over the counter medications such as Duofilm, Occlusal etc. may be used.

1. At bedtime, put a tiny amount of the wart-destroying medicine exactly on your warts with the enclosed applicator. Put the medicine only on the warts, as it may irritate normal skin.
2. After applying the medicine, cover your warts with adhesive tape. Use waterproof adhesive tape. The tape keeps your skin moist. The moisture softens the surface of the warts so the medicine will penetrate. It is all right to get the tape wet.
3. In the morning, remove the adhesive tape. If your skin tears when you do this, loosen the tape by painting nail polish remover (use a cotton-tipped applicator) between your skin and the tape.
4. After a few days, the outside of the warts will start to turn gray. This means the chemical has begun to destroy them. Scrape this gray wart tissue off every second or third day. Do the scraping after a bath or shower has softened the wart's surface. Be sure to remove *every bit* of dead wart tissue; otherwise it will keep the wart-destroying medicine from reaching the living tissue underneath. Sometimes a small curved scissors or a pumice stone helps in the removing of the dead wart tissue. Whatever you use for scraping your warts should not be used for anything else because warts are somewhat contagious.
5. If the warts become sore, stop the treatment for a few days.
6. If you don't see much progress after two to three weeks, try leaving the tape on until noon or even longer. Stubborn warts may need to be covered continuously with tape.
7. If your plantar warts hurt when you stand or walk, wear a pad cut out of *Dr. Scholl's Foot and Shoe Padding* (available without prescription). Cut a hole (or holes) corresponding to where the warts are. This will take the pressure off the warts.
8. Continue the treatment until you believe the warts are gone. If you can see the lines of your skin crossing the treated area, the warts are probably gone. If it turns out that after you stop treatment the warts are still there ( it happens) start treating them again until you feel more certain that the warts have gone away.
9. If necessary, continue the treatment for four months. If the warts haven't been destroyed after four months of treatment, return and a different approach will be used.
10. In case the warts become very painful or infected, return at once.