Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Using Duct Tape to Clear Viral Warts

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Patient Information

Dermatology Department

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Treatment of Viral Warts

Viral warts (also known as verruca when they are on the bottom of the feet) are caused by the human papilloma viruses. Most warts will disappear on their own without leaving a scar within 2 years. However, if you want to try and get rid of the wart sooner there are several options which can be tried. These include application of wart paint, cryotherapy using liquid nitrogen and occlusion with duct tape. However, some warts can be persistent and fail to respond to any of these treatments.

What is Duct Tape

Duct tape is a strong waterproof sticky tape used in the building trade. It is not available on prescription but can be bought easily from most do it yourself (DIY) / home improvement shops and supermarkets.

What does it involve?

The doctor or nurse will explain to you what a viral wart is and the treatment options available. If you decide to opt for treatment with duct tape it should be applied as follows:

- Cut a piece of duct tape as close to the size of the wart as possible and place this over the wart. Leave in place for 6 days. If it falls off, replace it with a new piece as soon as possible
- At the end of 6 days, remove the tape and soak the area in warm water and gently rub the wart with a pumice stone or emery board to remove any dead white skin
- Leave overnight without any tape then start the 6-day regime with duct tape again the next day

Repeat this 7-day cycle for 2 months or until the wart goes, whichever comes first

Benefits

If the treatment works, the wart may disappear more quickly than it would if no treatment is used.

Alternatives

- Leaving the wart to resolve by itself
- Daily treatment with wart paint for at least 3 months

Risks

- Skin irritation from the glue in the tape
- Pain around the wart after rubbing down the hard skin

Reference

A study done in 2002 concluded that the occlusion of warts with duct tape was significantly more effective than treatment with cryotherapy (85% of those treated with duct tape cleared compared to 60% clearance with cryotherapy)

Focht DR, Spicer C, Farchok M P. The efficacy of duct tape versus cryotherapy in the treatment of verruca vulgaris (the common wart). Arch Pediatr Med 2002; Vol 156, Pg 971-974.

Contact Details

If you have any concerns, please contact us at the Dermatology Department.

Telephone: 01942 264748 or speak to your General Practitioner (GP).



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