

How can warts be avoided?

You can't prevent warts from occurring but there are a few things you can do to avoid them and lessen the risk of exposure.

Be especially vigilant if your adolescent children or adult family members are involved in athletic pursuits where they are likely to spend time walking or standing barefoot in showers, locker rooms, training facilities or swimming pool decks. That's one of the reasons why plantar warts are so common in children and adolescents. Explain to them that the consequences of going barefoot can be skin infections. Here are a few tips that may be helpful.

- ✓ Keep feet dry.
- ✓ Avoid going barefoot on gym floors, decks of swimming pools and in public showers. Use clogs or sneakers as much as possible.
- ✓ Change shoes daily and keep the insides clean and dry.



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Dr. Zinsmeister received a B.A. in Biology at Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, PA and a Doctor of Podiatric Medicine degree from Pennsylvania College of Podiatric Medicine in Philadelphia. He completed his podiatric residency at Highlands Center Hospital in Denver, Colorado.

After accruing the required years of surgical experience and passing a rigid qualifying examination, he became Board certified in foot and ankle surgery through the American Board of Podiatric Surgery. Approximately only 30% of the podiatric profession nationally is certified through the highly respected American Board of Podiatric Surgery.

In 1985, he set up private practice in Andover and Quincy, Mass, later moving to Lexington. He is married and the father of two daughters. He resides in Andover.

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PLANTAR WARTS



*Foot Pain Relief
for Adults and Children*

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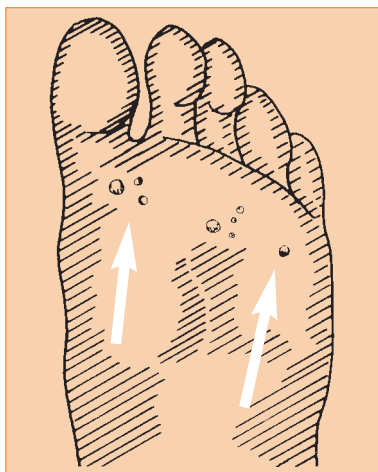
The small bump(s) on the bottom or outside of your foot ache or burn when you pinch them or walk on them. At first you thought they were corns or callouses, but they have a much sharper, hot sensation and they may be multiplying and spreading.

Foot warts are very common

Plantar Warts show up on the bottom (plantar) surface of the foot. At first, you may mistake them for corns or calluses. They affect persons of all ages, but are very common in adolescents or young adults who participate in group athletic activities.

At first, you will notice a bumpy, calloused area that is painful when squeezed or stepped on.

The warts are a skin growth which have a blood and nerve supply of their own. They appear as sponge-like little circles with small red, black or brown spots that are the blood vessels which feed them. Unlike warts on other parts of the body, these don't bulge outward, but grow inward under the outer layer of skin. Walking squeezes the nerve endings, causing pain.



Caused by a virus

Warts are really skin infections caused by a virus that enters the foot through a crack in the skin and

feeds off of the sub dermal layer. This type of virus thrives in warm, moist environments. The gestation period -- or time it takes from initial contamination until the wart appears -- varies widely from person to person, but it can be weeks.

Some individuals are more prone to the wart virus than others. Hormonal changes and stress have been known to be precipitating factors.

Plantar Warts are contagious and need to be treated by a physician

If left untreated, warts can spread to other parts of the body. Prompt diagnosis and treatment will greatly reduce the spread of the virus.

I picked up plantar warts from the locker room as a new freshman in high school. After a few weeks, the pressure and burning pain from walking in street shoes was too much to ignore.

During the chemical treatments, I felt nothing. For a few days afterwards, the bottom of my foot felt like mild sunburn, but it didn't inhibit my activities.

--High school student

Plantar warts are difficult to treat because most of the wart lies below the surface of the skin. There are no over-the-counter or home remedies that will effectively eliminate plantar warts. In most cases, successful treatment is only available through a medical professional.

The type of treatment depends on the size, number and site of the warts. Typical methods include applying a chemical acid solution or cryo therapy (freezing) or laser surgery (vaporizing). In cryosurgery, the warts are frozen and destroyed. In laser surgery, a beam of light is used to vaporize the

moisture within the wart. The chemical acid solution is applied during a series of office visits to burn off the wart slowly in stages.

There are advantages specific to each type of treatment. After treatment, you can expect some discomfort like a sunburn feeling in the treated area. Healing from laser surgery, depending on size, usually occurs within two to three weeks. During the healing phase, the area will be kept covered with a Band-aid dressing. No pain is present during the procedure itself (with the possible exception of the anesthetic injection), but there can be some mild discomfort in walking for a few days following the procedure, depending on the location of the wart.

Plantar Warts can recur like a cold

New warts can appear as quickly as old ones are treated. Most often this happens because the old warts had spread virus into the surrounding skin and new warts were too small to be visible. Like a cold, the wart virus can come back again, especially if you are re-exposed or are susceptible to the virus. Early treatment usually gets the best results. If you find a possible wart, show it to us for professional diagnosis. Don't risk spreading it further.