



The **Perth Foot & Ankle Clinic**

Foot Facts

Warts (*Plantar Warts, Verruca, Verrucae Pedis*)

What are Warts?

Warts (*also known as Plantar Warts, Verrucas, or Verrucae Pedis*) are caused by a viral infection. They can occur anywhere on the body, but are most frequently found on the hands and feet. If they occur on the bottom of the foot—"Plantar" refers to the sole of the foot—they can be very painful.

Warts are caused by a type of virus called the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), which invades the skin through small cuts and abrasions. Other predisposing factors include the use of communal bathing facilities, sport centres, swimming pools and gymnasiums. Once the skin is infected with the virus it may remain latent within the skin, or develop into a wart, and become clinically observable. Plantar warts may present in either single, multiple or mosaic type pattern.

Who Gets Them?

Warts can affect any age group, but most commonly affect children and young adults.

Signs and Symptoms

Common features of warts include:

- Loss of normal skin pattern (the lines which you can see in finger prints)
- Presence of many minute dark spots, which are the tips of small blood vessels
- Overlying thickened skin (callous)
- Warts tend to be flat and hard with a rough surface and well-defined borders
- Pain with lateral compression (squeezing from side to side) rather than direct compression, and sometimes pain on weight bearing

Treatment

There is no single treatment for warts because no treatment type has been shown to be successful in every case. In many cases warts may resolve spontaneously in sometime between a few weeks, and a few years, but this is unpredictable. Treatment is indicated

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if there is concern with the possible spread of the virus, the wart is growing quickly, or pain is present. The following treatment options may be considered:

- Chemicals which break down skin tissue (*Keratolytic agents*);
- Cryotherapy or freezing of the wart;
- Caustic agents to chemically “burn” the wart;
- Curettage or surgical removal of the lesion under local anaesthetic.

Generally, all methods have some possibility of the wart coming back.

Preventative Measures

- Foot hygiene: avoid walking barefoot, changing socks daily, keep feet dry and clean
- Avoid direct contact with warts from other people
- Take note of any unusual growths or changes on your skin, and get them checked by your doctor or podiatrist

Please note that this information is not to be used as a substitute for the advice of a health professional

