



# Treating Warts at Home

## *What you can do*

**This handout gives detailed instructions for many ways to treat warts at home.**

There are many home treatments for warts. You need to do most of them daily or almost daily for many months before you see improvement. Clinic treatments such as freezing warts or treating them with chemicals are good options, but treating them at home often works nearly as well. And, it is something you can and should do even if you are having clinic treatments.

### **Salicylic Acid and Lactic Acid (DuoFilm)**

In the periods between freezing warts in clinic, it is important to keep “irritating” the wart. You can do this with a tape called DuoFilm or a similar generic product that contains 17% salicylic acid in flexible collodion. Or, you can use plasters, solutions, or pads containing 17% to 40% salicylic acid.

Choose the product that is easiest for you to use and that you are most likely to keep using. You can buy all of these over the counter (without a prescription) in the foot care section of most drugstores. Also buy a *pumice stone* (a rough stone available in the same section of the store), and a small roll of duct tape.

As soon as you feel comfortable after the freezing in clinic, do one of these home treatments every day:

#### ***DuoFilm***

- Apply a coat of DuoFilm on each wart and let it air dry until the material turns white and feels dry.
- Apply the medicine only to the wart and a thin border of normal, unaffected skin around the wart. Putting the DuoFilm on too much normal skin may irritate it.

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Dermatology Center:  
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### *Salicylic Acid Tape, Plaster, or Liquid*

- Apply the salicylic acid tape, plaster, or liquid over the wart and a thin border of normal, unaffected skin.
- Cover the wart and the treatment product with duct tape. Leave it covered for about 24 hours, unless it becomes uncomfortable.
- Remove the duct tape just before bathing.
- After bathing, gently rub the dead, white skin off with the pumice stone.
- When the area is dry, apply a fresh treatment.

**The day before you are scheduled to return to the Dermatology Center, leave the area open to the air with no product or tape on it.** The wart should be frozen at least every 3 to 4 weeks. This combination of home and clinic treatments usually gets rid of the wart.

### **Hyperthermia Wart Therapy**

Warts are caused by a virus that cannot survive in very hot temperatures, above about 110°F (43.3°C). Your skin usually burns above about 115°F (46.1°C). Exposing a wart to heat (*hyperthermia*) above 110°F but below 115°F will kill the virus without hurting your skin. The heat keeps the virus from reinfecting your skin, and the wart will “grow out” normally after several months.

- Find a comfortable place where you can sit quietly for 30 minutes. It should be a place where you will not be hurt and furniture or rugs will not be damaged if the hot water spills.
- Use a container or pan that will hold water and the portion of the skin that is affected by the wart(s). A styrofoam container works well.
- Heat the water to 113°F (45°C). Use a candy or brewing thermometer to make sure the water is the correct temperature.
- Keep the water at this temperature for the full 30-minute treatment by keeping a pot or tea kettle of hot water nearby. Add a small amount of hot water when needed to raise the temperature back to 113°F. **Be very careful not to pour the hot water directly on your skin.** Placing a towel over the soaking container will help keep the water hot.

Another option is to use a home foot bath with an adjustable temperature control. Be sure to use a thermometer to check the water temperature before using it. You can buy these baths at most drugstores. They will reach the correct temperature, but they are costly.

Do this hyperthermia treatment 3 times a week. The warts will usually begin to die off in 2 to 6 weeks.

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