



## Wart Removal

Children get a lot of warts. Maybe that is why folklore attributes warts to touching frogs or toads. Forget that myth. Here are the facts on warts that every parent should know.

- Between 10% and 20% of children have common skin warts.
- Girls get more warts than boys.
- Warts are most prevalent in children between the ages of 12 and 16.
- Warts are contagious, but typically harmless.

While medically harmless, warts bother some children more than others. Some children are embarrassed by warts. Others may be uncomfortable if the warts are on the soles of their feet. As a parent, it is important to know what causes warts, how to help prevent them, and good treatments for warts.

### **Causes and Types of Warts on Children**

Warts, caused by the human papillomavirus or HPV, are noncancerous skin growths. They form when the virus invades the skin, usually through a tiny cut or scratch. The virus causes rapid growth of cells on the outer layer of skin. Warts are usually skin-colored but can be dark. They can be rough or smooth.

Here are the types of skin warts, known medically as verrucae:

- Common warts are found on the fingers, and the backs of the hands
- Palmer warts are found on the palms, as the name suggests.
- Plantar warts grow on the feet, typically the soles
- Flat warts are typically smaller and smoother than other warts; they can grow in large numbers, even as much as 20 to 100 at a time. Flat warts on children are typically found on the face.
- Filiform warts look like the kind that cartoon witches get on their chins or noses and stick straight out. They are often found on the face.

### **Reducing the Risk of Contagious Warts in Children**

The viruses that cause common skin warts are passed from child to child. Once the virus infects the skin, it typically takes several months for the wart to become visible.

Some children are more susceptible to warts than others. Children with a compromised immune system—such as children who have had an organ transplant—are more likely to get warts. Kids who bite their nails or pick at hangnails—creating tiny cuts in the skin—are also more likely to get warts as are those with eczema.

Even children with healthy immune systems and good nail habits may be more susceptible to getting warts, just as some people are more likely than others to catch colds often.

Children pick up the virus in many ways: By sharing towels and toys or playing with friends. However, there are ways to reduce the odds of your child developing warts. Here are some tips:

- Encourage your child to wear flip-flops around a public swimming pool and in public showers.
- At home, if someone else has a problem with plantar warts, encourage the one with warts (if old enough) to spray a dilute bleach solution in the shower stall or bathtub after use and then rinse.
- Assign one bath and hand towel to each child, and tell them not to share towels.

Of course, there is no sure way to prevent warts. Simply playing with other children exposes kids to the possibility of catching warts. A child with warts plays on monkey bars, for instance, and another child with small cuts on the hand touches the surface. The virus is transmitted and that other child develops warts.

### **Should You Treat Warts on Children?**

Fortunately, warts do not harm a child's health, and often go away on their own. Doing nothing for warts is perfectly. In one study, researchers reported that warts spontaneously cleared in 40% of children within two years without any treatment.

Still, many children are bothered by warts and want them removed. Warts on feet can pose problems, leading to discomfort and inability to perform well in sports, for instance. Even common warts on hands may bother a child who is embarrassed.

**For more information about this subject please check:**

**The Center for Disease Control at [www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/)**

**The American Academy of Pediatrics at [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)**