
Genital Warts

General information about warts

Warts are skin growths caused by viruses. Wart viruses can be passed to others by direct contact, or indirectly in such places as locker rooms and public showers. They can also spread on the same individual by picking, or scratching. Genital warts are spread by sexual contact so patients and partners should use condoms until all warts have been eradicated.

Genital warts are commonly treated with Cantharone or liquid nitrogen cryotherapy (applied by a physician). The normal action of these treatments is to form a blister underneath the wart. This occurs within 24 hours of application. Occasionally, there may be some blood in the blister fluid so don't be alarmed if this occurs. The blister may also be painful, inflamed and itchy. Your physician will recommend appropriate medication to counteract this.

Treatment progression (what you can expect)

4 HOURS: Mild discomfort may occur; control with bathing and Tylenol for pain.

24 HOURS: Blister usually formed within 24 hours.

4 DAYS: Crusted blisters fall off leaving superficial erosions. Medication may be needed to control nighttime itching.

7 DAYS: Healed with temporary residual inflammation/redness. Any resistant lesions will be re-treated by your physician at your next appointment.

Temporary loss of normal pigmentation often occurs.

Re-examination/re-treatment

Most people are cured after 2-4 treatments depending upon the size and number of warts. All warts must be destroyed or they will grow back.

Next appointment

You should return to the clinic in two weeks for re-evaluation. Occasionally warts occur inside the urethra, vagina or rectum. Your physician will need to examine these areas to ensure that all warts have been eradicated. Untreated, venereal warts can lead to cervical or penile cancer.