

Plantar Warts

What is a plantar wart?

- A plantar wart is a small, rough growth on the foot.
- Plantar warts often form on pressure spots (like the heels and balls of the feet). This pressure may cause a wart to grow inside a callus (thick, hard layer of skin).
- Plantar warts often go away without treatment, especially in children under the age of 12.



What causes a plantar wart?

- A plantar wart happens when the outer layer of skin is infected with a virus called HPV (human papillomavirus). HPV enters the skin through tiny cuts, breaks, or weak spots on the bottom of the foot.
- HPV is very common. There are more than 100 kinds of HPV, but only a few cause plantar warts.
- If a plantar wart is not treated, it can last for:
 - › a few months to 2 years in children.
 - › several years in adults.
- Anyone can get a plantar wart, but it is more likely to happen in:
 - › children and teens since they are more likely to be exposed when playing sports, in locker rooms, around swimming pools, or by sharing towels or socks.
 - › people with weak immune systems who may not be able to fight off a virus.
 - › people who have had a plantar wart before.
 - › people who walk barefoot in areas where HPV is common (like locker rooms and swimming pools).

How is a plantar wart treated?

A plantar wart can be treated by:

- › Cryotherapy (freezing)
- › Electrocautery (using an electric current to remove the wart)
- › Surgery
- › Immunotherapy (using a chemical cream which causes a mild allergic reaction to make the wart go away)
- › Laser treatment (which uses light to heat and remove the wart)
- › Topical treatment (prescription creams or liquids).

**What are your questions?
Please ask. We are here to help you.**

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

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Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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