

Warts

Description

Warts are generally harmless skin growths. They are very common, affecting around one in 10 children.⁴⁷

Warts are thickenings of the skin and are usually round or oval shaped. They are clearly different from the surrounding skin. Warts are caused by a virus infection of the skin (Human papillomavirus). The virus enters the skin through scratches or other damage to the skin. Occasionally warts come out in a crop. There are many types of warts and warts can appear in many places on the body.

How are they spread?

Warts are usually spread by direct contact with someone who has warts. Picking or scratching may lead to spread of warts on the same person. Plantar warts can come from walking with bare feet on wet floors such as in swimming pool change rooms.

Incubation period

2–3 months but ranges from 1–20 months. Once infected with the virus it may take up to a year or more for the wart to become visible.⁴⁷

Infectious period

Unknown, but if untreated probably as long as warts can be seen.

Exclusion period

Nil

Responsibilities of educators and other staff

Make sure staff and children practice effective hand hygiene.

Responsibilities of parents

Advise children not to pick or scratch at warts. Practice effective hand hygiene at home.

Controlling the spread of infection

Avoid direct contact with warts.

Make sure that effective hand washing and cleaning procedures are being practised.

Treatment

It is not essential to treat warts, especially if they are not causing any problems.⁴⁷ Warts will usually go away naturally, but this may take a long time. If treatment is necessary the following may be used:

- Liquid nitrogen
- Chemical paste applications.

⁴⁷ The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne – Kids Health Info: Warts 2010, viewed 20 March 2013
http://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Warts/