

PLANTAR WARTS

Description

Plantar warts are a common foot problem most frequently found in kids. They are caused from a viral infection in the skin. This infection occurs from direct contact with the virus. Warts do not spread through the blood stream and can only live in skin tissue. They can be picked up in showers and around the swimming pools. They are not highly contagious, but being exposed in just the right situation will lead to the development of a wart. The name plantar wart comes from the location of the foot where they are found. The bottom of the foot is called the plantar surface. Plantar warts are usually not painful unless they occur on a weight bearing portion of the foot.

Signs/Symptoms

Plantar warts often appear as well demarcated thick areas of skin. They are often misdiagnosed as a callus when they occur on the bottom of the foot. A simple way to distinguish between a plantar wart and a callus is to squeeze the lesion between your fingers in a pinching fashion. If this causes pain it is most likely a plantar wart. Callus tend to elicit more pain on direct pressure. Plantar warts can also appear in large spread out clusters with normal appearing skin between each cluster. This presentation is called mosaic warts.

Treatment

There are many treatments for plantar warts including; topical application of medication, oral medications, freezing with liquid nitrogen, injectable medications, laser treatment, and surgical excision. The treatment of choice will depend on location, size, patient's age and activity level, and doctor preference. Over-the-counter medications tend not to be successful because the skin on the foot is thick and the medication has trouble penetrating. Laser treatment and surgical excision are more reliable but are associated with more risks, such as infection and the development of a scar.