

# Regal Chambers Surgery

50 Bancroft, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 1LL

T:(01462) 453232

F:(01462) 631536

[www.regalchambers.co.uk](http://www.regalchambers.co.uk)

Dr V Fraser

Dr A Cruickshank

Dr M Vorster

Dr D Barratt

Dr H Davies

Dr F Sinclair

Dr L Czech

Dr P Mehta

Dr S Crabtree (Salaried GP)

Yvonne Pope

Business Manager

## WARTS AND VERRUCAS

PLEASE NOTE:

***Freezing treatment is no longer performed at Regal Chambers for warts or verrucas. This is because there is no evidence that freezing is any better than the other treatments available and can cause more side effects.***

## INFORMATION

Warts and verrucas are caused by the wart virus that infects the skin cells, and until the body builds up immunity to the virus they will remain and can spread to other areas. However in the vast majority of people they will clear spontaneously once the body builds up immunity. If required they can sometimes be cleared more quickly with treatment (see below).

## TREATMENT

There is no need to treat warts if they are not causing any problems. Without treatment about 3 in 10 warts have gone within 10 weeks, and most warts will have gone within one to 2 years, and leave no scar. The chance that a wart will go is greatest in children and young people. In most cases simply waiting for them to go is usually the best thing to do.

The most commonly used treatments are:

- Salicylic acid
- Freezing treatment
- Covering with duct tape

### Salicylic acid

Studies report that about 7-8 in 10 warts cleared within 3 months with daily use of salicylic acid.

Various lotions, paints, and special plasters are available that contain salicylic acid.

These are available at the pharmacies. These should usually be used as follows:

- Apply each day for up to 3 months.
- Every few days rub off the dead tissue from the top of the wart with emery paper. Gradually the wart is rubbed away.
- It is best if he soak the wart in water for 5-10 min before applying acid.
- You should not apply this to the face because of the risk of skin irritation which may cause scarring.
- If you have diabetes or poor circulation, you should use salicylic acid only on the advice of a doctor.

Tips for success include:

Try not to get the acid on the skin next to the wart as it may become irritated. You can protect nearby skin by putting some Vaseline on the normal skin beforehand, or by putting on a plaster with a hole in it which exposes wart for treatment. If the surrounding skin does become sore, stop treatment for a few days until it settles and then restart treatment. It may take 2 weeks or more before you notice any improvement. It can take up to 3 months or daily applications for warts to go completely. Treatment may work better if you put a plaster on the wart after applying the acid. Acid lotions and paints are flammable. Keep them away from open fires and flames.

### **Freezing treatment**

This is no longer available at Regal Chambers, because there was no evidence of freezing is any better, and has more side effects than other treatments. Freezing treatment has not been shown to be any better than salicylic acid. It can be painful and sometimes a small blister develops full a day also on the nearby skin after treatment. Also, there is a slight risk of scarring the nearby skin or nail, or damage to underlying tissues such as tenderness or nerves. It is felt suitable for young children of people with poor circulation.

### **Duct tape treatment**

Studies have found that covering a wart with strong adhesive tape is likely to clear the wart within a month or two (not for use on the face). Using duct tape about 7 in 10 warts and cleared within 2 months. The method suggested is:

- Cover the wart with duct tape for 6 days.
- After 6 days, remove the tape and soak the wart in water for 5 minutes.
- After drying rub the wart gently with an emery board.

### **Preventing spread of warts to others**

Warts can be spread to other people although the risk is low. To reduce the chance of passing on warts to other people the following is suggested:

- Don't share towels
- When swimming cover any wart or verruca with a waterproof plaster
- If you have a verruca wear flip-flops in communal shower rooms and don't share shoes or socks.

### **To reduce the chance of warts spreading to other areas of your body:**

- Don't scratch warts
- Don't bite nails or suck fingers that have warts
- If you have a verruca, change your socks daily.