

Notice to all athletes, physical education students and swimmers.

Please help prevent the spread of foot viruses which are commonly found in warm, moist areas such as locker rooms and communal showers. In addition to these common areas; shoes, boots and sweaty socks are also a haven for foot viruses to live and thrive. While the locker rooms, showers and pool areas are regularly cleaned and sanitized, deck shoes (flip flops or sandals) are a required part of the physical education and swimming uniform kits and should be worn in these high risk areas.

Preventative suggestions to resist contracting nonthreatening viruses which commonly attack the feet include:

- **Keeping your feet clean and dry.** Change your shoes and socks daily.
- **Don't go barefoot in public areas.** Wear sandals or flip-flops in public pools and locker rooms.

For additional information on a common foot virus such as, Verruca Plantaris or Plantars warts, please visit the AAS Health office or visit the following website;
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/plantar-warts/DS00509>

Plantar Warts

Definition

Plantar warts are growths on the soles of the feet. They are often mistaken for corns or calluses. The warts are different because they are caused by a virus. They grow in clusters and are usually flat. A plantar wart can often be distinguished by numerous black dots visible on their surfaces. Although plantar warts are generally harmless, their location beneath the feet can make them very tender. They also have a tendency to spread locally to other sites on the foot and elsewhere.

Causes

Plantar warts are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). It can be contracted by walking barefoot on unsanitary surfaces. Touching and scratching can cause the virus to spread.

Risk Factors

Factors that increase your chance for plantar warts include:

- Exposing your feet to unsanitary surfaces
- Age: Plantar warts are more common in children and teens.
- Suppressed immune system due to:
 - AIDS
 - Lymphoma
 - Immunosuppressive drugs
- Atopic dermatitis (eczema)

Symptoms

Symptoms include:

- Hard, flat growths on the soles of the feet
- Heaped-up calluses surrounding the wart surfaces
- Pain in the area of the warts

Diagnosis

The doctor will ask about your symptoms and medical history. Your feet will be examined. Some doctors may wish to refer difficult cases to specialists. Podiatrists focus on foot disorders. Dermatologists focus on skin disorders.

Treatment- *Unfortunately, warts can be very resistant to treatment and can reoccur, but the following are some treatment methods that may prove to be effective.*

There are many over-the-counter products available to treat warts. These therapies often contain a mild acid. You can usually apply them when a wart first appears. Another popular and less expensive treatment is using duct tape to cover a wart for a week at a time. This is also done with weekly “sanding” of the wart with a pumice stone.

You should see a doctor:

- For recurrent warts
- For those that fail to respond to initial treatment
- When over-the-counter therapies are not well-tolerated
- When the diagnosis is unclear

After confirming the diagnosis of plantar warts, the doctor may use one or more of the following:

- Cryotherapy—freezing the warts to kill the virus

- Laser treatment—using a laser to kill the virus and destroy wart tissue
- Electrocautery treatment—burning the wart
- Hyperthermia treatment—applying heat to kill the virus
- Surgical removal—cutting out the warts (with anesthetic)
- Immune therapy—application of substances that stimulate the immune system’s response to the wart-causing virus

Prevention

▪ The best ways to prevent plantar warts is to keep your feet from coming into contact with the virus that causes them. Ways to do this include:

- Avoid walking barefoot, except on sandy beaches.
- Wear plastic sandals when showering in public bathrooms.
- Change your shoes and socks daily.
- Keep your feet clean and dry.
- Avoid direct contact with warts, either from other people or from other parts of the body.

In addition, periodically checking for warts on children’s feet may help prevent them from becoming larger and painful.

RESOURCES:

The American Academy of Dermatology

<http://www.aad.org/>

American Podiatric Medical Association

<http://www.apma.org/>