

## AN IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE HEALTH OFFICE

### WARTS

Warts are skin growths caused by a virus. Common and flat warts are seen most often in younger children and plantar warts in school-aged children.

**CAUSE** Human papillomavirus (HPV).

**SYMPTOMS** **Common** - Dome-shaped and have a rough appearance. They usually grow on the fingers, on the backs of the hands, and around the nails, but may be more common where skin is broken (bitten fingernails or picked hangnails). Black dots in a wart are produced by broken blood vessels.

**Plantar (foot)** - Usually seen on the bottoms of the feet. Most of these warts flatten because the pressure of walking pushes them back into the skin. They can be very painful. They may also have black dots.

**Flat** - Smaller and smoother than other warts. They tend to grow in large numbers (20 to 100) at a time and can grow anywhere. However, in children they are most common on the face. They are found in the beard area of men and on the legs of women.

**SPREAD** Passed from person-to-person, sometimes indirectly from contaminated objects, such as locker room floors, showers, or pool decks. The virus more easily enters the body through an area of skin that is moist, peeling, or cracked.

**INCUBATION** It can take from several months to years for symptoms to begin.

**CONTAGIOUS PERIOD** Unknown; probably as long as the wart is present.

**EXCLUSION** Childcare and School: None.

**DIAGNOSIS** Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider.

**TREATMENT** Based on the type of wart.

#### **PREVENTION/CONTROL**

- Discourage children from biting their nails or picking their hangnails.
- Encourage students to do basic first aid when they have an injury (e.g., cut or scrape), if appropriate for age group.
- Encourage children to wear shower shoes (e.g., flip-flops or water sandals) in locker rooms and showers or on pool decks.
- DO NOT allow sharing personal items such as razors or nail clippers.

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

*This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information contact the AAS Health Office or your Health care provider.*

#### **RESOURCES:**

The American Academy of Dermatology

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

American Podiatric Medical Association

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

Yours in health,

AAS Health Office Staff