

## ***Warts: Considering the Options***

Warts are caused by a common viral infection of the skin. They primarily affect children and young adults. **It is estimated that two thirds of all warts resolve spontaneously within two years whether they are treated or not treated.**

Warts are only present in the outer layers of the skin. They do not have “roots” that go into the body. While warts are never a serious medical problem, some warts on the feet may cause discomfort with walking, or warts on the hands may cause embarrassment. If warts are bothersome, treatments might make them go away faster. Medical studies that have examined the best treatment options recommend using over-the-counter wart paints that contain a mild acid. Dermatologists also recommend simple home treatments with salicylic acid. Salicylic acid does make some warts resolve faster, but it is not effective for all people. We do not recommend treatments such as liquid nitrogen (freezing) since it may be painful and can cause blistering or permanent scarring. To date, there is no medical evidence to support the use of liquid nitrogen over salicylic acid. Other treatments tried over the years involve methods of “skin destruction” such as shaving off, burning, strong acids or chemicals and lasers. No form of wart treatment is guaranteed to work, and all treatments may have side effects such as pain, scarring, skin infection, or they might make the wart larger.

**Remember, no treatment is necessary if your child is not bothered by the warts!**

Please do not hesitate to make an appointment at our office if you need to confirm that your child has warts. If you are certain that your child does have a wart(s) and you wish to begin home treatment, we recommend trying an over the counter acid product such as “Compound W”.

1. Purchase a salicylic acid preparation at your local pharmacy. The liquid with an applicator will allow you to target just the wart and a tiny area of healthy skin around the wart better than the salicylic acid patches.
2. At bedtime, apply the salicylic acid preparation to the wart. Let it dry.
3. Apply adhesive tape or duct tape over the wart and salicylic acid.
4. In the morning, remove the tape and file away any softened wart tissue.

Repeat this procedure every night to slough off the wart gradually. Several months of this treatment may be necessary before the wart(s) resolve.

**As always, we are happy to evaluate your child in our office and discuss management options with you in person if you wish.**