



Health Fact Sheet: Verruca

What is a Verruca?

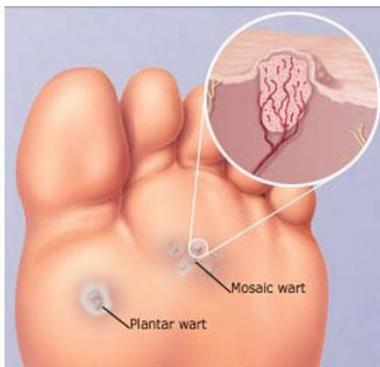
A verruca is also commonly called a plantar wart. It is an infectious viral infection which enters your skin through a scratch or a cut in your foot.

Once the virus has penetrated into a site on your foot there may be no immediate sign of infection. It could take months before a verruca appears. The Virus enters the top layer of your skin, called the epidermis and is pushed into the deeper layer of your skin called the dermis. This is due to pressure going through the sole of your foot when standing/walking. Therefore a verruca will affect the two layers of skin on the sole of your foot.

There are 2 types of Verrucae, you can have a single verruca or a mosaic verruca. A mosaic verruca is a cluster of verrucae in the one site in your foot, therefore appearing quite big and unsightly.

What does it look like?

Both types of verruca have the same appearance, although the mosaic verrucae tends to be on a grander scale. If you are able to have a really good look at a verruca, you will be able to see the capillary heads pushed up from the dermis, into the epidermis layer of skin. They look like you have little bits of pepper corn under your skin.



The verruca creates thickened skin to grow over the affected site, which is why some people may think a verruca is a corn at first. The thickened skin can grow very hard and quite bumpy, like the top of a mini cauliflower head!

Also, look at your finger tips and you will see your finger prints. These lines are called striations. If you have a verruca the striations where your verruca will have disappeared. However when your verruca goes away the striation lines will come back again.



How did I get this?

Just like catching the cold from being around someone who has the virus, you can pick up the verruca virus by walking around barefoot, after someone who has a verruca. Popular places to come into contact with the verruca virus are around the swimming pool and public changing rooms. To limit contracting the virus, wear flip flops around the pools and changing rooms.

If you or someone else in your family has a verruca, never share a towel and do not walk barefoot around the house. Verrucaes are contagious!

How do I treat this?

Most warts and verrucas will go away by themselves and don't need any treatment. Often, leaving them is the best option, especially for children, as some treatments can be time-consuming, painful and cause side-effects.

However, you may want to consider treatment if your wart or verruca becomes painful, unsightly or doesn't go away. There are many different types of treatment for warts that you can check with your doctor.

There are many creams, gels and medicated plasters for treating warts and verrucas, which you can buy at pharmacies.

Swimming advice

If you or your child has a wart or verruca, going swimming is fine as long as you take steps to prevent the spread of infection.

You can put special rubber verruca socks which is available from pharmacies.

Wearing pool slippers or flip-flops around swimming pools and in communal changing areas will also reduce the risk of getting verrucas or passing them on to others.