

What are viral warts?

Viral warts (plantar warts) are small lumps that often develop on the skin of the hands and feet. They vary in appearance and may develop singly or in clusters. Some are more likely to affect particular areas of the body. For example, verrucas are viral warts that usually develop on the soles of the feet.

Viral warts are non-cancerous, but can resemble certain cancers. Treatment for viral warts is restricted to patients who meet the minimum eligibility criteria below. This is because most viral warts can be managed with over-the-counter treatments, such as ointments or gel, or by treatments prescribed by the patient's family doctor. Treatment for viral warts that does not meet the patient eligibility criteria below is deemed to be a cosmetic procedure.

Patient eligibility criteria:

The patient's local NHS commissioning organisation will **ONLY** fund this treatment if the patient meets the following criteria below:

- ano-genital warts that have failed treatment within general practice setting or Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinic.

Treatment options include:

- **salicylic acid paints/gels** available in different strengths. Salicylic acid works by removing the outer dead layers of skin and triggering the immune system into clearing the virus
- **freezing warts** (cryotherapy) with a very cold gas (liquid nitrogen) which is available from the patient's GP or pharmacy
- **chemical paint** (contact immunotherapy) which causes an allergic skin reaction that may boost the body's immune reaction against the viral wart virus.

The clinician in charge of the care of the patient's specific condition, usually a hospital doctor, can assist the application, if there is exceptional clinical need for the treatment to be funded. The patient's clinician must evidence clinical exceptionality and must be supported by the patient's local NHS commissioning organisation. See separate leaflet for more information on Individual Funding Requests (IFRs).

Advice and further guidance:



For more information visit the British Association of Dermatologists website and search for 'plantar warts' under the patient information leaflets <http://www.bad.org.uk>

Treatment policy for patients covered by NHS Solihull, Birmingham CrossCity and Birmingham South Central Clinical Commissioning Groups.