

# Viral Warts

## General points

- Warts should not be referred to secondary care, primary care and self care is best
- They are self-limiting and there are no easy or guaranteed treatments or magic cures
- They are best left to resolve spontaneously
- >60% hand / facial warts clear in 2 years, plantar warts can be more persistent

Patient information leaflet [here](#)

## Treatment

- Treatment works by damaging the central core in which the virus resides. Then the virus is exposed to the host immune system which then eliminates it and the wart heals. However it can be painful and is not recommended for young children
- There is no evidence that cryotherapy or any other treatments are any better than over the counter salicylic acid
- Histofreezer is ineffective
- Affected children need their own towels to reduce risk of transmission to siblings
- Treat associated eczema / infection with appropriate emollients / antibiotics

## *Cryotherapy*

- pare down with a scalpel first – aim to damage the central core
- every 3 weeks – if no improvement after 4-5 treatments then likely to be ineffective and stop
- hands – one freeze / thaw cycle – feet – two freeze / thaw cycles (10 seconds each)

## *Topical therapy*

- Use OTC gels e.g. salatac or cuplex
- Apply daily after bathing and rubbing down wart with pumice stone to expose central core
- Treatment may take many months
- Regular daily and persistent treatment is the key to success
- Occasionally application of Duct tape has been effective!
  - Details are on the above patient information sheet

NB: If significant warts or molluscum, consider whether immunocompromised.