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PATIENT INFORMATION SERIES

11. The Treatment of WARTS

Warts are caused by a virus. Although 80% of warts may go away within two years on their own, some patients need to treat some warts. In many cases the surgical destruction of the wart infected skin may not be the optimal treatment or may fail. In those cases the wart infection will be treated topically.

- You will be treating your wart with a chemical called salicylic acid. This chemical slowly softens and destroys the wart. It is not convenient and it takes a very long time to work but it is painless and doesn't scar. Apply the liquid paint-on version of salicylic acid (**COMPOUND W, Dr. SCHOLL'S** or **DuoFilm**) to the wart or warts once per day. If possible, apply to wet skin after a shower or bath. Cover with any medical grade tape, (athletic tape is the best). The wart will get very soft, mushy and turn white. Once per week use an emery board or a pumice stone to rub away this dead skin. Rub until it hurts or bleeds, whichever ever comes first. Continue this regimen until you can't find the wart or warts.
- Apply the **ALDARA** (Imiquimod) to the warts everyday once per day for at least three weeks. Continue this regimen until you can't find the wart or warts. Some of you will be instructed to cover the area with tape, some of you will be told not to.
- Some of you will use a combination of these two treatments. Use the **topical salicylic acid** under occlusion for a week and pare down as above. Then apply the **Aldara** (Imiquimod) to the same wart daily under tape for another week. Then repeat the cycle by starting with the salicylic acid again for a week followed by the Aldara for a week. Keep rotating these topical therapies until told to stop or until there is no longer evidence of the wart.

You should see the doctor at least once every two or three months while you are treating your warts.