

Does Duct Tape Treat Warts?

Most people have heard the old wives tale that duct tape is an effective treatment for warts. If you understand in full how warts come to be and what they are caused by, you can easily understand that this is just a story. Warts are a surface virus that we routinely see in our practice.

Plantar warts are caused by contact of the skin on a moist surface. The name of the virus is the Human Papilloma Virus. If someone touches a moist surface with an exposed wart and you contact that surface within a short period of time, you can wind up developing warts.

Warts appear in many ways. Most commonly you will see a thickness of skin on the bottom of the foot, but the wart can be seen elsewhere on the foot. Typically you will see a little black specks under the lesion, which are small capillaries or vessels. These lesions are typically painful to walk on. The problem with warts is if they are not treated by a specialist, such as a podiatrist, the possibility of another outbreak with many other lesions developing over time is a possibility.

Duct tape has long been thought of as a remedy for warts. Of the hundreds, if not thousands of warts I have seen I have never seen this as a cure. There are multiple studies that have disproved this treatment.

Simple debridement of a wart by a foot specialist with application of a strong acid is our first treatment choice. Patients are sent home with a home care kit of a special antiperspirant (moisture control agent) for the foot and an acid treatment. We recommend patient apply it twice a day.

Moisture control is of paramount importance in treating plantar warts because warts love moisture. Within a few short visits to our practice we usually see resolution of the annoying painful lesions. If conservative care fails we will provide surface laser treatments to our patients. Surface laser is relatively new and requires no anesthesia or injections and works on disturbing the blood supply to the warty lesions.

Other treatment options are excision of mass with a scalpel and complete destruction the wart with another type of laser.

As you can see there are a multitude of ways a podiatrist/foot specialist can provide care to this pesky problem. Ways to avoid warts are always to wear shoe gear, whether it be a shoe or a sandal. When going into public showers always wear flip-flops to decrease possibility of skin contact. When diagnosed with a wart by your foot doctor make sure you bleach your floors, especially in the shower area.