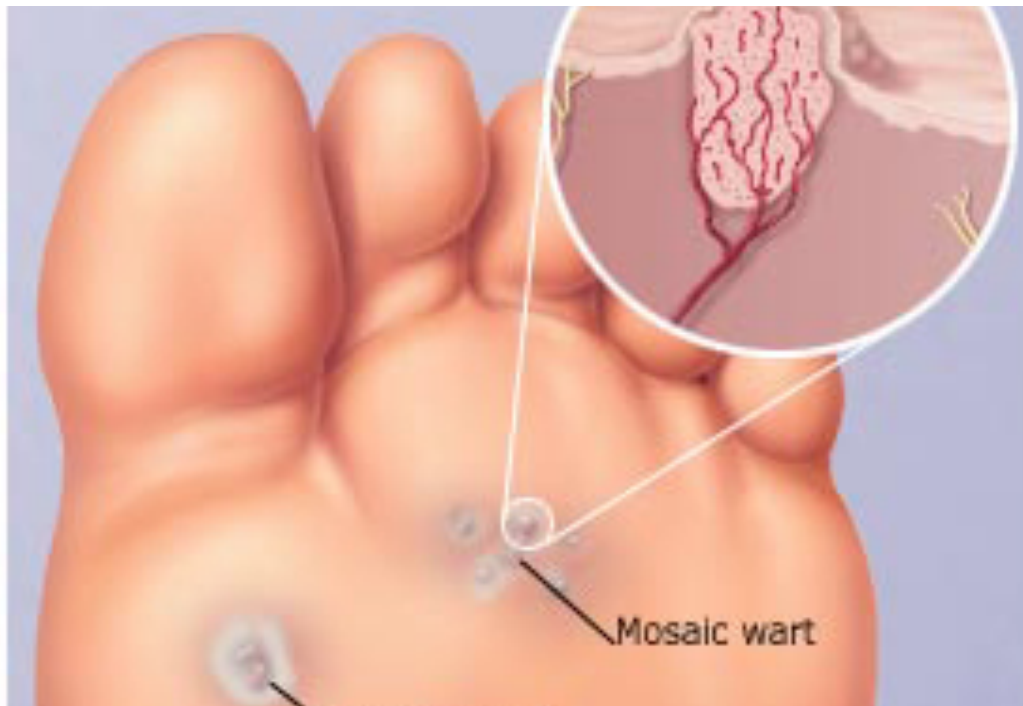


Plantar Warts



Warts (verrucae) are caused by a virus infection and can appear anywhere on the skin. Plantar warts are noncancerous skin growths caused by the Human papillomavirus, HPV and because they are located on the bottom of the foot (plantar surface) are known as verruca plantaris or plantar warts. Each person's immune system responds differently to HPV, so not everyone who comes in contact with the virus will develop plantar warts. Even people in the same family react to the virus differently.

A plantar wart may occur as a single lesion or as a tightly packed cluster over a small and localized area. This formation is known as a mosaic wart and can grow and spread over the entire sole of the foot. Pinpoint bleeding may occur when these plantar warts are scratched and they may be painful when standing or walking.

Warts are often mistaken for other skin lesions including corns and calluses and more serious conditions including malignant lesions such as carcinomas and melanomas. These malignant lesions, although rare, can sometimes be misidentified as a wart. Unlike corns and calluses, warts are a contagious skin disease with a center encapsulated area of small blood vessels and nerves. This area appears dark brown, black or rust colored. Over the counter treatments without a proper diagnosis are not recommended as warts may be mistaken for other medical conditions.

Warts are contagious to susceptible people and can spread by touching, scratching or even by contact with skin shed from another wart. There are a variety of treatments available and will depend on the extent and size of the lesion. Both medical and surgical options are available. Because of their depth of penetration, self treatment with topical creams and gels is often very slow and commonly unsuccessful.

Cryosurgery (cryotherapy) is a quick and effective in-office treatment for the removal of skin lesions and plantar warts by killing the cells that contribute to the formation of abnormal tissue. It is a minimally invasive treatment that uses extreme cold to freeze and destroy diseased tissue.

Our office uses the newest generation of portable, disposable cryosurgical devices. A small hand-held device with a lightweight canister and angled cone applicator delivers a metered dose of the cryogen to the lesion during the procedure to achieve precise treatment duration. The procedure is self-anesthetizing and any discomfort is momentary and usually subsides within seconds. Redness in the area will appear after treatment and the dead tissue usually sloughs off within a week or so. Many lesions are resolved with a single treatment however depending on the type and extent of the lesion several cryotherapy treatments may be needed. Most cases require little if none postoperative care and no leave from work or study.