



Self-Care – Warts & Verrucas Guidance for Care Homes

Taking care of your “SELF” – Supporting Everyone to Live Freely

This is a self-care guide designed for those working in care homes, residential homes and assisted living.

The information provided in this guide does not replace person centred clinical advice.

The following information should be used as a guide when advising or purchasing self-care treatments for people residing in a care home, residential home or assisted living. Self-care medication and medical products are not always the most appropriate choice for treating minor ailments. Sometimes starting with a lifestyle change or trying natural remedies can be more effective.

Should you have any concern, at any time around self-care items being purchased on behalf of the resident or being brought in by relatives for the residents use, please discuss with your community pharmacist or GP practice.



What are Warts and verrucas?

Warts and verrucas are small, rough lumps or growths on the skin. They are caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV) and are most common on the hands, knees and feet. The name of a wart on the sole of the foot is a plantar wart or verruca.

Warts don't cause any harm but some people may find them to be itchy, painful or embarrassing. Verrucas are more likely to be painful and can feel like a needle prick to the skin. Most people will have warts at some point in their life. If left untreated, warts will usually clear up on their own, but this may take months or even years.

Symptoms of warts:

- Warts don't usually cause any symptoms; however, the resident may complain that they are uncomfortable or painful.

Preventing Warts:

- Try not to touch other people's warts; if assisting a resident to self-treat a wart you should wear gloves to prevent the wart spreading
- Advise the resident not to share towels, socks or shoes
- If the resident has a verruca you may want to advise they use shower shoes to prevent it spreading
- The resident may want to purchase some waterproof plasters to help prevent the spread of the verruca
- Advise that the resident does not pick or rub the wart or verruca as this could cause it to spread
- If the resident wants to purchase a pumice stone or foot file to self-treat the wart then advise that they should only be used on the affected area.

Speak to the community pharmacist who will be able to advise on what Self-Care items are available to purchase over the counter

Treating warts and verrucas:

- If the resident wants to purchase some self-care products to treat a wart there are several products available, such as creams, gels, medicated plasters and sprays
- Self-Care treatments can take up to 3 months to complete
- Self-Care treatments are not guaranteed to work
- Self-Care treatments can cause skin irritation
- Take care in treating diabetic patients with verrucas – always seek advice from the diabetes nurse at the GP practice.

You should only need to contact the GP if:

- You are worried about a skin growth and don't believe it to be a wart
- The resident has a wart or verruca that keeps coming back despite self-care treatment and is causing discomfort
- The wart is very large or painful
- If the wart bleeds or changes in how it looks
- If the wart is on the residents face or genitals
- The resident is diabetic.

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References:

NHS Choices - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/warts-and-verrucas/>

Bupa - <https://www.bupa.co.uk/health-information/directory/w/warts-and-verrucas>