**Verrucas and Warts**

* **For most people there is a strong case for not treating warts or verrucae.**
* Warts on the hands do not usually cause symptoms and, in most cases, resolve spontaneously within months or within 2 years, 4-5 years at the most.
* Occasionally cryotherapy has been used but this requires several treatments, can be painful especially for younger children and may cause them distress, blistering, infection, scarring, and depigmentation.

Verrucas which are warts on the soles of the feet are difficult to treat and cryotherapy is unlikely to help — as pain caused by verrucas are usually due to thickening of the skin, regular paring with over the counter applications can help make the feet more comfortable.

**What advice should I give to someone with warts or verrucae?**

* Advise that:
  + Although warts can be cosmetically unsightly, they are not harmful; usually they do not cause symptoms and resolve without treatment.
  + Warts are contagious, but the risk of transmission is thought to be low.
  + To reduce the risk of transmission:
    - Cover the wart with a waterproof plaster when swimming. The Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) states that the use of swimming socks should be discouraged and that a waterproof plaster is sufficient.
    - Wear flip-flops or other appropriate footwear in communal showers.
    - Avoid sharing shoes, socks, or towels.
  + In order to limit personal spread (auto-inoculation):
    - Avoid scratching lesions.
    - Avoid biting nails or sucking fingers that have warts.
    - Keep feet dry and change socks daily.
  + Children with warts or verrucae should not be excluded from activities, such as sports and swimming, but should take care to minimize transmission.

Please see your local chemist for further advice and/or

* + - [Plantar warts (verrucas)](http://www.bad.org.uk/shared/get-file.ashx?id=176&itemtype=document) from the British Association of Dermatologists.
    - [Warts and verrucas](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/warts-and-verrucas/) from the NHS.