

**Bumps, warts or milia on your face?
Inappropriate treatment may cause scars!**



When small brown bumps grow on one's face or pea-sized lesions grow on one's hands and feet, people often mistake them for milia. Even though they might be asymptomatic, these lumps and bumps may actually be viral warts, regardless whether they may be unsightly or not. How does one get rid of them? Some people think that they can easily get rid of warts by beauticians for wart removal or even buying over the counter home remedies for self treatment. However, many wart-removal products can cause skin irritation or even irreversible damages. Without a proper professional diagnosis and definitive treatment by a doctor, treatment efficacy may be limited and there will even be the possibility of worsening the situation and leaving damaging scars.

What are "warts"?

Warts are abnormal keratinous growths in the outer skin caused by infection with human papillomavirus (HPV). People who are elderly, have weaker immune systems, under greater pressure, or have poor personal hygiene may be more prone to being infected. Although warts do not cause serious illness, they are infectious and hence contagious which means they can spread to other bodily parts as well to other close contacts at home or at work. Modes of spread include walking barefoot in public areas; sharing slippers, towels, cosmetics and other personal items with infected people; swimming in public swimming pools; bathing in hot springs; using fitness equipment; and receiving unsterilized beauty treatments etc. Therefore, paying attention to hygiene is an extreme vital part of wart prevention.

How to distinguish warts, freckles, milia, and calluses?

	Wart	Freckle	Milium	Callus
Cause	HPV infection	Exposure to sunlight, aging of skin	Excessive oil secretion	Thickening of stratum corneum (outermost skin) from long-term friction
Appearance	Black, brown or flesh-coloured; possibly black in the centre; often grow in clusters; slightly raised surfaces	Yellow, brown; relatively flat; colour may gradually deepen to a dark brown	Mostly yellow-white, round, raised surface	Large, irregular in shape, thick and rough to the touch
Common locations	Anywhere on the body	Anywhere on the upper body	Forehead, nose, below the eyes; areas with greater oil secretion	Palms and soles

Modes of treatments

In most cases, warts will disappear after proper treatment. Clinics and beauty salons may offer various wart removal treatments, and certain shops may also sell ointments or lotions. Since most warts are not painful or itchy, patients will typically underestimate the condition and use over the counter (OTC) medicines or go to beauty salons for treatment. However, such self-medication is never worth it due to incomplete removal.

1. Self-removal

Some patients will attempt to cut off raised warts themselves. However, wart-causing viruses are located much deeper in the skin. Merely cutting off a superficial wart partially cannot permanently cure it and may instead lead to an infected wound. After the wound is healed, the virus will still be present and warts still grow and spread.

2. Cryotherapy (Freezing)

Medical cryotherapy uses liquid nitrogen at approximately -200°C to treat the affected area. This destroys the infected epidermal tissue and indirectly removes the virus responsible for the wart. Generally, cryotherapy needs to be performed every 2-3 weeks until the warts are completely removed. During each treatment, the patient will feel a cold and tingling sensation on the targeted area. After treatment, there is usually no scarring.

As for OTC cryotherapy wart removal patches or pens, they will usually only reach temperatures of -50 to -60°C. Hence, the inadequate temperatures reached by home liquid nitrogen are not very effective at destroying viral warts. In addition, repeated use of the same cryotherapy wart removal product in different locations on the body may cause cross-infection; unsuccessfully removed warts may spread and multiply.

3. Using high acidity ointments and lotions

Prescription-strength with high acidic content (salicylic acid) ointments and lotions for warts can remove excess stratum corneum (outermost skin) layers by layers of wart being removed. Used daily, they may help remove warts.

However, these topicals can be time consuming and even cause skin irritations after prolonged use. Therefore, the treatment should be performed by trained professional medical staff to ensure safety and may benefit from combination with cryotherapy.

4. Electrocautery treatment

Electrocautery treatment is a method that directly destroys wart tissues and can eliminate wart indefinitely. Proper handling and use of electrocautery professionally is vital as this procedure is prone to scarring with a relatively long recovery period.

5. Laser treatment

Doctors may use a carbon dioxide laser or pulsed-dye laser to treat warts. The carbon dioxide laser will vaporize the wart tissue and the pulsed-dye laser will heat up the blood cells inside the wart, thereby destroying the wart tissue. Prior to treatment, a doctor will apply topical anaesthesia to the wart infected area to minimize patient discomfort. The treated area will recover within 5 to 10 days after the procedure and usually without scarring. This office procedure is relatively quick with permanent removal within 1-2 sessions.

This health article was written by the FindDoc editorial team, and has been reviewed by Dr. Elizabeth Chang.

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臉上驚現小肉粒，是疣還是油脂粒？
不當處理隨時越生越多兼留疤



當臉上長出啡肉色的小肉粒或手腳長出形如米粒的肉粒時，不少人以為是油脂粒，但其實可能是疣。即使不痛不癢，卻影響外觀，想除之而後快？有些人以為到美容院接受脫疣療程，甚至自行購買家用的除疣產品使用，就可以輕鬆脫疣。不過其實許多脫疣產品都對皮膚具一定風險，若缺乏醫生的專業診斷和操作，不但治療效果有限，更有機會讓情況惡化並留下疤痕。

什麼是「疣」？

疣是一種因感染人類乳頭瘤病毒（HPV）而引起的表皮不正常角質增生。年紀較大、免疫系統較弱、壓力較大和個人衛生較差的人都屬於高危族群。疣雖然不會引致嚴重疾病，但具有傳染性。例如在公眾地方赤腳走路，與患者共用拖鞋、毛巾、化妝品等貼身用品，又或者在公眾泳池游泳、泡溫泉、使用健身器材和接受美容療程等都有機會受感染，因此注意衛生是預防疣的重要一環。

如何分辨疣和斑、油脂粒、繭？

	疣	斑	油脂粒	繭
原因	HPV 病毒感染	日光照射、皮膚老化	油脂分泌過剩	皮膚受到長期摩擦後角質層變厚
外觀	面疣常見的顏色有黑、啡和肉色，中心可能會有黑點，一次會長很多顆，表面稍稍凸起	淡黃、啡色，表面較平，顏色會逐漸加深到深啡	多數是黃白色，圓形，表面較為圓鼓	面積較大，形狀不規則，摸起來比較粗糙
常見位置	全身	上半身的任何位置	臉部 T 字位、眼底、油脂分泌較多的位置	手、腳底

自行去疣有風險 隨時造成傷口感染

在大多數的情況下，疣在治療後才會消失。有些診所和美容院有提供不同的去疣療程，坊間也有售賣一些自行脫疣的藥膏或藥水。由於大部分的疣都不痛不癢，患者難免會輕視病情，隨使用成藥或到美容院治療，但這隨時得不償失。

1. 自行切除

有些患者會嘗試剪掉微微凸起的疣。可是疣病毒位於皮膚深層，單純剪走並不能根治，反而有機會造成傷口感染。

2. 冷凍治療

醫學用的冷凍治療會使用約攝氏負 200 度的液態氮治療患處，讓受感染的表皮組織壞死，間接去除病毒疣。一般來說，冷凍治療需每 2-3 個星期進行一次，直至疣被完全清除。在治療的過程中，患者會感到冰涼和刺痛。而在治療後，通常不會留下疤痕。

至於市面上的冷凍脫疣貼或冷凍筆，溫度通常只有負 50-60 度，跟醫學用的液態氮有很大差別，因此治療的效果並不明顯。而且在不同位置重複使用同一件冷凍去疣產品有機會造成交叉感染，不能脫疣之餘更有機會愈長愈多。

3. 使用極酸性藥膏、藥水

針對疣的極酸性藥膏、藥水能去除多餘角質層，每天使用有助去疣。不過市面上的極酸性脫疣藥膏、藥水的成效需視乎當中的成分和濃度，且需配合長時間使用。而這些極酸性藥膏、藥水亦有機會引起皮膚紅腫和敏感。因此治療應該由經過訓練的專業醫護人員操作，以確保安全。

4. 電灼治療

電灼治療是一種直接破壞疣組織的治療方法。電灼容易產生疤痕，而且恢復期也較長。

5. 激光治療

醫生會使用二氧化碳激光或者燃料脈衝激光治療疣。二氧化碳激光會氣化疣組織，燃料脈衝激光則會令疣內部的血紅色素受熱，從而摧毀疣組織。在療程開始前，醫生會為患者塗上麻醉藥，故患者在治療過程中並不會感到痛楚，術後大概 5 至 10 天就可復原，而且多數不會留下疤痕。此外，激光治療的療程需時相對較短，通常 1 至 2 次療程就可以把疣永久移除。

文章由 FindDoc 撰寫，並經張宗蕙醫生審閱。FindDoc 是一站式醫療健康資訊及服務平台，為市民大眾提供全面、最新的健康資訊，更提供網上預約醫生、醫療服務及視像問診服務。