

Suffolk Podiatry

Verrucae

What is a Verruca?

A verruca is a small wart on the foot. Like all warts it is caused by the Human Papilloma Virus.

Verrucae often have a rough, bumpy appearance and may contain small black dots. It is quite common for them to occur in groups, sometimes with one large lesion with smaller verrucae around it.

Some people are naturally more susceptible to verrucae than others.



How do you catch them?

The human papilloma virus is contagious. You can catch verrucae by coming into skin contact with surfaces where other people with verrucae have walked barefoot. The virus thrives in warm damp environments like changing rooms and swimming pools, so these areas are some of the more common places where you may catch a verruca. You are also more likely to catch a verruca if you share towels or footwear with someone who has the infection. Any cuts or injuries on your foot may allow the virus to penetrate the skin more easily.

Who can catch a verruca?

Anyone can catch a verruca although they are more common in children because their immune system is still developing. This is especially true if they frequently use communal showers, changing rooms and swimming pools. In the general population some people are naturally more or less immune to verrucae than other people.

People with certain medical conditions which impair the immune system are also more susceptible to this type of infection.

How should I treat it?

- DO NOT scratch or pick the area as verrucae can easily spread to other parts of the foot and the body.
- Self treatment is fine and there are many ointments and gel products available over the counter at your local pharmacy. (Please follow the instructions for these over the counter remedies carefully and avoid damaging the healthy skin around the verruca).
- Most verrucae will disappear over time themselves as the bodies immune system starts to fight the virus. Allowing the verruca to disappear by itself is thought to help increase immunity to them in the future.

Should I visit a Podiatrist?

- Do not self treat verrucae if you have diabetes or circulatory problems.
- The general policy for verrucae is only to treat them if the patient has other medical conditions that may put them at risk of complications.
- Unless you have an underlying medical condition which may be a cause for concern, most patients referring themselves to the NHS podiatry team for treatment of a verruca, are not likely to receive an appointment.
- Private podiatrists will often provide treatment for verrucae for a price. Be careful to ensure that any podiatrist that you visit is registered with the HCPC (Health and Care Professions Council). You can check their membership details by going to <http://www.hpc-uk.org/check>

More verruca information is available from the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/warts-and-verrucae/>



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