



Got warts? Go to your nearest hardware store!

By Robert St. Clair, MD



The human body is an amazing thing with a miraculous ability to heal itself. In the case of the simple wart, though, it needs a little help from Davenport Building Supply.

Warts are a type of infection caused by viruses. They generally grow on skin, but have also been found inside the mouth. Some, especially in areas of increased physical contact, like the bottom of the foot, are extremely painful. How can we make these nuisances go away?

Although some disappear on their own, it often takes several months, even years. Consumers today are told that various creams and ointments will make them vanish. As a physician, I've frozen many problem warts off patients throughout the years. But a new scientific finding caught my eye and reminded me again of the amazing immune system.

It seems researchers have found that common over-the-counter do-it-all duct tape (yes, the kind I use to hold my truck together) is a great wart remover.

In a study at Madigan Naval Hospital in Tacoma, physicians found that duct tape was less painful and more effective at removing warts than freezing them with liquid nitrogen.

Those taking part in the study either chose Cryotherapy (freezing) or put duct tape over their problem wart for six days. They then removed the tape, soaked the wart in water and used an emery board or pumice stone to scrape the spot. The duct tape was put back on the next day and the process was repeated for up to two months. After that time period, only 60 percent of the frozen warts were successfully removed, but 85 percent of those choosing duct tape saw their warts disappear in less than 28 days.

And, to the surprise of everyone, other warts, which were not covered by the duct tape, disappeared as well.

Why? Researchers believe the duct tape not only kept oxygen from the covered wart, but irritated it, causing a reaction of the immune system. The immune system attacked not only the affected wart, but other warts throughout the body. Amazing!

A former colleague, Dr. Richard Gascoigne, says he's seen duct tape in action while working with a dermatologist in Michigan. He says not only does duct tape work in many cases, but adding heat to the equation can be beneficial as viruses hate heat. Dr. Gascoigne says if you have plantar warts on your feet, resting them on a heating pad might help.

So the next time a problem wart is cramping your style, try some Duct-o-Therapy. It's inexpensive, painless, leaves no scars and seems to be effective. If it's not, come see me and we'll give that wart the cold shoulder.

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