

Difference Between Plantar Wart and Common Wart

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Key Difference – Plantar Wart vs Common Wart

Warts are abnormal skin growths caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV). The virus enters the body through the breaches in the skin and proliferates within the epidermis. **The viral proliferation results in an abnormally rapid growth of the skin that is identified as a wart. When these warts appear on the plantar surfaces of our feet they are called plantar warts.** Thus, the key difference between plantar wart and common wart is their location.

What are Common Warts?

Warts are abnormal skin growths caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). Few recent discoveries have uncovered that there is an association between HPV infection and cancer. The microscopic examination of the specimens from warts has revealed that the virus proliferates within the nucleus of the epidermal cells. There are over eighty types of HPV causing different forms of warts.

HPV is the virus responsible for cervical carcinomas. In immunosuppressed individuals, it can also cause squamous cell carcinomas.

There are two categories of warts according to the anatomical region of the skin that they arise from,

- **Cutaneous warts**
- **Mucocutaneous warts**

The chance of genital warts undergoing any malignant changes is very low, but HPV infection of the cervix caused by type 16 leads to dysplasia and subsequent malignant changes.

In patients taking immunosuppressive drugs, there is an extensive proliferation of warts, increasing the likelihood of squamous cell malignancies.

Epidermodysplasia verruciformis is a rare condition characterized by the widespread eruption of flat erythematous warty plaques that have malignant potential.



Figure 01: Filiform wart on the eyelid

Treatment

Usually, warts occur in children and get resolved spontaneously within few months. They are treated with ointments and lotions containing [salicylic acid](#), [lactic acid](#) or glutaraldehyde.

Liquid nitrogen is another frequently used chemical in treating warts. The use of liquid nitrogen is associated with minor adverse effects such as blistering and scarring. Heat cautery can also be used but it causes more scarring and requires local anesthesia. Diathermy loop is the preferred method for the management of perianal warts. Podophyllin dissolved in benzene or alcohol is also used to remove warts, especially in the genital regions but it is poisonous when ingested and can have serious hazardous outcomes if administered during pregnancy.

Other treatment modalities seldom used in the management of warts are,

- Laser therapy
- Immune enhancement
- Bleomycin injections

What are Plantar Warts?

As described at the beginning, warts that appear on the plantar surfaces of the feet are called plantar warts. Just like any other wart they usually disappear spontaneously.

Salicylic plasters are commonly used in treating plantar warts.



Figure 02: Plantar Wart

What is the difference between Plantar Wart and Common Wart?

- Plantar warts are a subset of common warts.
- Plantar warts have got the specific name because of the place they appear: the plantar surface of feet.

Summary – Plantar Wart vs Common Wart

As we have discussed here, there is only a slight difference between plantar warts and common warts. Warts are self-limiting conditions that do not require any treatment, in most cases. Maintenance of a good personal hygiene solely can decrease the incidence of this dermatological condition.

References:

1. Buxton, Paul K. *ABC of dermatology*. London: BMJ , 2007. Print.

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