



PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUTS

Using Duct Tape to Remove Warts

Many pediatricians use cryotherapy with liquid nitrogen to treat *verruca vulgaris* (common wart), which occurs in 5% to 10% of all pediatric patients. The procedure, however, has many drawbacks including the fear and discomfort children experience; complications such as blisters, infections, and pigment change (dark or light) of the skin; and the need for frequent clinic visits for successful treatment. People have observed for some time the apparent success of duct tape occlusion therapy for the treatment of common warts. But until 2002 no randomized, prospective studies had previously been done comparing tape with other therapies. In a study done in 2002*, 51 patients 3 to 22 years of age with common warts were randomized to treatment with either cryotherapy or duct tape. Results showed that 85% of patients in the duct tape group had complete resolution of their warts compared to 60% in the cryotherapy group. In addition, minor complications were more common in the cryotherapy group. The researchers also noted that warts that ultimately responded to tape therapy showed at least partial resolution after two to three weeks of treatment. The researchers concluded that warts can be successfully treated at home with inexpensive duct tape.

Here is the technique used in the study:

- Cut a piece of duct tape to the size of the wart and apply to the affected area
- Remove the tape after 6 days , then soak the wart in water
- Use a pumice stone or emery board to rub away soft callus
- Leave tape off overnight, then re-apply the following morning for 6 days
- If the tape falls off prematurely, re-apply a new piece
- Continue the treatment for up to two months
- If there is no improvement after one month of treatment, consider discussing cryotherapy with your doctor

* Focht DR, et al. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med.* 2002;156:971-974