

# How Warts Are Removed by Freezing Them

## How will the wart be removed?

Your wart can be removed without hurting the skin around it by using a two-step treatment. The first step is getting your wart ready to be removed. You can help with this step. The second step is cryosurgery (freezing the wart), which will be done by your doctor in his or her office. You may need to have several freezing treatments before the wart is completely removed.

## What do I need to do?

Getting the wart ready for removal requires you to do some things on your own at home. Doing these things before you come to the office can reduce the number of times you need to come in to have the wart treated by freezing it. You should do the following steps:

1. Every night for two weeks, clean the wart with soap and water and put some 17 percent salicylic acid (Compound W) on it.
2. Cover the wart with a piece of 40 percent salicylic acid pad (Mediplast). Cut the pad so that it is a little bit bigger than the wart. The pad has a sticky backing that will help it stay on the wart.
3. Leave the pad on the wart for 24 hours. If the area becomes very sore or red, stop using the gel and pad and call your doctor's office.
4. After you take the pad off, clean the area with soap and water, put more gel on the wart and put on another pad. If you are very active during the day and the pad moves off the wart, you can leave the area uncovered during the day and wear the pad just at night.

## What happens next?

After two weeks of this treatment, your wart will have turned white and will look fluffy. Your doctor then will be able to remove the white skin layer covering the wart and use cryosurgery to freeze the base (root) of the wart. Tell your doctor *before* cryosurgery if your skin reacts strongly to cold.

Cryosurgery can be uncomfortable, but it isn't usually too painful. The freezing is somewhat numbing. When your doctor places the instrument on your skin to freeze the wart, it will feel like an ice cube is stuck to your skin. Afterward, you may feel a burning sensation as your skin thaws out.

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Healing after cryosurgery is usually quick. You will probably be able to enjoy all your usual activities while you heal, including swimming and bathing. Cryosurgery leaves little or no scar. After the area has healed, the treated skin may be a bit lighter in color than the skin around it.



This handout provides a general overview on this topic and may not apply to everyone. To find out if this handout applies to you and to get more information on this subject, talk to your family doctor.

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