

Verrucae Pedis

- Verruca

Waikato Podiatry - Patient Information



How do I know if I have it?

A Verruca feels like a small lump under the foot.

They can be painful if you squeeze or pinch them

or bear direct weight on them.

Unless the Verruca occurs on weight bearing surfaces, they protrude above the level of the skin showing a rough 'cauliflower' surface. Verrucae found on weight bearing areas are forced to grow inwards and as a result can be painful as they press on the skin's nerves.

These Verruca often have a layer of callous on their surface, giving them a yellow/grey shiny appearance.

What is it?

A Verruca is a small viral skin lesion or (plantar wart) found on the bottom of the foot or toes, which closely resembles, and is often confused with a corn. Its size is usually under 1cm in diameter but can grow larger and can also occur in clusters (mosaic warts).

Children are the most susceptible to Verrucae infection, as at this age, the immune system is not fully developed. Verrucae are also easily spread from person to person in places such as showers, around swimming pools, in gyms, locker rooms, saunas and rough wet surfaces where skin and infected particles are easily removed.

What might be the cause?

Verruca pedi are caused by the human papilloma virus. This is a slow growing virus found in most of our environments, and gains entry into the body through a break in the skin, such as a scratch or cut.

The virus only grows in the epidermis, the thick layer of skin closest to the surface. Verruca don't invade the dermis, (the deeper layer of skin), however the epidermis and the Verruca grows extra blood vessels and nerves in response to the virus. It is because of these nerves, that the wart hurts when pinched and because of these blood vessels that it stays well nourished, and enough to grow.

The virus particles can spread from the main Verruca, along the cutaneous (skin) nerves, to begin growing remote or satellite Verruca at a distance from the original site. If enough of this spread occurs, mosaic Verrucae result.

Verrucae are more common in children as their immune system is not fully developed; part of the treatment for a verruca often involves stimulating the immune system, and exposing the verruca to the body's immunity to stimulate a healing response.

Pain Reduction

Ultimately the goal of the treatment is the removal of the painful lesion. Often the verruca will become more painful the larger it gets, and the deeper it sits in the skin of the foot.

Temporary pain relief can sometimes be had by removing the bulk of the tissue, but this means that the problem still remains and the pain is likely to quickly return. That is why pain reduction is primarily focused on permanently removing the viral tissue and the painful verruca.



How can it be treated?

On visiting your Podiatrist, a diagnosis can often be based on characteristic appearance alone. Firstly, your Podiatrist trims any hard skin (callous), which will reveal the small blood vessels that feed the Verruca. They look like small black dots.

Your Podiatrist will also test the Verruca by pressing directly down on it, and then pinching it from side to side.

Your Podiatrist has a number of choices for treating Verrucae pedis. We will start with acid treatments that are stronger than what is available at the pharmacy, to help speed up the process. Nitric Acid has the benefit of not diluting when wet. Acids work by breaking the Verruca capsule, allowing the body's immunity to take over and reducing the bulk of the viral material.

Liquid nitrogen (cryosurgery) freezes the skin to induce a blister that will rupture the Verruca and shed the infected particle. The problem with this treatment is it can be painful and may leave viral particles behind, causing regrowth. Depending on the size and number of Verruca, these treatments can take from one to several treatments before the Verruca is completely removed.

Still in Pain?

Are you are feeling like you have tried everything but are still in pain?

Do you feel like you have seen every health practitioner you can about your verruca pain?

We have a track record of diagnosing and successfully treating verruca cases that have previously proven difficult to resolve and we'd love to help you get back on your feet doing what you love.

***Providing the people of Waikato
with a centre of podiatry excellence***

Contact Us

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Call us or drop us an e-mail & we'll get back to you as soon as possible to discuss your verruca pain and possible solutions.



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Long Term Solution

As with most conditions getting the correct diagnosis in the first place is very important. Verrucae can often misdiagnosed and wrongly treated.

They can be diagnosed as corns, or cysts, which look very similar to verrucae, although the treatments are quite different. Treatment involves anaesthetic to numb the area and the use of an instrument called curette to remove the Verruca whole. The healing time is 2-4 weeks, depending on its size.

Conservative (non-surgical) treatments are the first line of treatment for verrucae. These usually involve topical applications, such as assets and other caustic agents to try and help remove and kill the viral tissue. One of the problems with these is that the verruca may be deep into the skin, and so pain can occur with the deeper the topical lesion.

Once your Podiatrist has completed an initial assessment, they will be able to determine the best course of action, with the aim to completely remove the Verruca and reduce the possibility of recurrence.

If non-surgical treatment isn't an option, surgery may be the route to completely remove the Verruca in one visit.

Many Verruca are stubborn and even the best methods for removing them allow a rate of reoccurrence of around 15%.

