

Department of Dermatology

Oral zinc for warts

Information for patients



What are warts?

Warts are growths on the skin, caused by viruses. They do not usually cause any problems, but may catch on something (e.g. clothing or glasses), which can be painful, and may make you feel embarrassed or cause teasing between children.

Is there any reason why some people develop warts?

Warts often develop in people who are otherwise well. However, if your immune system is not working properly or you are taking medicine that suppresses your immune system, you may develop more warts which can be harder to treat.

Can they be cured?

There are many treatments but unfortunately none are completely effective. Fortunately most warts will disappear without any treatment over time.

How can zinc help to treat warts?

There have been several studies which have shown that a simple supplement of zinc can improve and clear warts. Zinc supplements (usually tablets) can be bought over the counter at most pharmacies.

They have been shown to be safe and effective, in particular in people who have not previously responded to treatment. We would recommend a trial of taking zinc supplements for at least 3 months. You can take them with or without food.

The dose prescribed should cause no side effects. You can continue to take the zinc after this time if you need to. It is safe to be used long term.

Treatment

You can buy zinc supplements over the counter. We will tell you which dose needs to be taken.

Zinc supplement tablets, 15mg zinc	Adults and children	One to two tablets daily
Effervescent zinc tablets (which dissolve in water), 15mg zinc	Adults and children more than 30kg (around 5 stone)	Daily dose 15-45mg E.g. 1 tablet, 1-3 times daily
Other options include jelly chews with zinc (2 chews contain approximately 5mg zinc, but check the packet) which may be suitable for smaller children	Children less than 30kg (around 5 stone)	Daily dose 5-30mg E.g. 2 chews, up to 3 times daily

How to contact us

If you have any further questions, please contact the Dermatology Consultant's secretary:

Tel: **01865 228 224**

(Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm)

Alternatively you can speak with your own GP, who should be able to help.

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALS@ouh.nhs.uk**

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