

## Duct Tape Can Get Rid of Warts: Study

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) Mon Oct 14, 6:08 PM ET- The next time you're in need of a wart cure-all, forget combing the aisles of the local pharmacy and head over to the hardware store instead.

According to the finding of a small study in children, applying plain old duct tape to the common wart (scientifically known as *Verruca vulgaris*) appears to be superior to traditional cryotherapy with liquid nitrogen.

While anecdotal reports abound of duct tape's wart-removing abilities, the therapy has not gone head-to-head with other wart removal techniques, according to the report published in the October issue of the *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*.

In the current study, the researchers compared duct tape therapy to cryotherapy, which involves several visits to the doctor's office. During the treatment, a physician freezes the wart by applying a quick, narrow blast of liquid nitrogen to the offending blemish. This is repeated once every two or three weeks until the wart is gone.

Aside from the inconvenience of frequent visits to the doctor's office, another potential drawback to this method is that many children are afraid of the treatment and may find it painful, according to lead author Dr. Dean R. Focht III, who conducted the study with colleagues Dr. Mary Fairchok and Carole Spicer while at the Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Washington.

"Tape occlusion, if proven effective, could be an inexpensive, convenient and painless alternative to cryotherapy in the treatment of pediatric warts," they write. Focht is now at the Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati.

In the study, the researchers randomly assigned 51 patients between the ages of 3 and 22 to receive either a maximum of 6 cryotherapy treatments, once every two to three weeks, or two months of duct tape therapy.

In duct tape therapy, a nurse covered the wart with a piece of duct tape roughly the same size as the wart. Patients (or their parents) were instructed to keep the duct tape on for 6 consecutive days and if the tape peeled off during that time, apply another at home.

At the end of 6 days, patients soaked the wart in water and rubbed it with an emery board or pumice stone. The next morning a new piece of tape was applied. The routine was repeated for a maximum of two months.

During the study, all of the patients returned frequently to the doctor's office to have their warts measured and evaluated by a nurse.

The investigators found that 85% of those in the duct tape group, compared to 60% of those in the cryotherapy group "had complete resolution of their warts.

"This study shows that duct tape occlusion therapy is not only equal to but exceeds the efficacy of cryotherapy in the treatment of the common wart. Tape occlusion therapy can now be offered as a nonthreatening, painless, and inexpensive technique for the treatment of warts in children," according to the report.

It's not clear exactly how the duct tape sends warts packing, according to the report, "but, as with other therapies, it may involve stimulation of the patient's immune system through local irritation."

SOURCE: *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 2002; 156:971-974.