



A guide to...

Oral zinc for warts

Patient Information

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What are warts?

Warts are growths on the skin caused by viruses. They do not usually cause any problems, but may catch on some things (eg 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. 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 three months. You can take them with or without food.

The dose prescribed should not cause any side effects. You can continue to take the zinc after this time if you need to. It is safe to use long term.

Treatment

You can buy zinc supplements over the counter. We will tell you what 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 eg 1 tablet, 1-3 times daily
Other options include jelly chews with zinc (2 chews contain approximately 5mg of 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 a day.