**Warts**

Warts are a very troublesome problem for many, many people. They are caused by an infection with the wart virus, also known as the "human papillomavirus" or "HPV". Because warts are mildly catchy, they can be picked up from direct skin-to-skin contact with other people or from walking through water that contains the wart virus, such as in a shower or locker room. Although most people who have warts try very hard to get rid of them, this is a very very tough thing to do because the wart virus is very difficult to destroy. There are several things that your dermatologist can do to the wart in the office to help it go away. Unfortunately, all of these methods involve returning to the doctor's office every few weeks for multiple appointments. Contrary to popular belief, it is not possible to remove a wart in just one visit with methods such as laser, cautery, burning the wart, cutting it out, scraping it out, etc. These methods just don't work, because the wart usually grows back inside the scar and the scar can be quite painful and unattractive. Because of this, all the treatments performed in the dermatologist's office involve returning for multiple appointments in order to have treatments that help your body's immune system fight off the wart naturally. You can ask your dermatologist if any of these treatments are right for you. Because it can be quite inconvenient to go to the doctor's office for multiple appointments, many people prefer to have treatments that they can perform themselves at home.

**Instructions for treating your wart at home**

1. Your dermatologist will prescribe a prescription-strength acid ointment to apply directly to the wart. You can buy this prescription at any pharmacy.
2. Apply a small amount of this acid ointment to the wart in a thin layer. You could use your bare hands or a Q-tip to apply but remember to wash your hands afterward. Be careful not to spread the acid ointment onto the normal skin surrounding the wart. Some people paint the normal skin with one coat of clear nail polish before applying the acid to the wart.
3. After applying the acid to the wart, cover the entire area with a large square of regular silver-coloured duct tape that you can purchase at a hardware store. The duct tape helps the acid medicine penetrate the wart.
4. For warts on the feet, the duct tape can be left in place until it falls off on its own (a few days). You can shower with it on or play sports. When the duct tape starts to fall off, remove it. Apply a fresh coat of the cream, and a new large square of duct tape. Repeat this process every few days.
5. For warts on the hands or other visible areas, apply the acid and the duct tape in the evening, sleep with it on, and then remove it in the morning before going to school or work. Do this every day.
6. Continue with the treatment and be patient. It can take three months or more to start noticing an improvement, even if you perform the treatments daily.