

Care Instructions for Molluscum Contagiosum & Warts Treated with Cantharidin (blistering solution)

Molluscum contagiosum is a common skin growth caused by a viral infection in the top layers of the skin. They are similar to warts, but are caused by a different virus. This virus can be easily spread by skin contact.

A **wart** is a small, rough growth resembling a cauliflower or a solid blister. It typically occurs on humans' hands or feet but often in other locations. The human papilloma virus causes warts. There are as many as 10 varieties of warts, the most common considered to be mostly harmless. It is possible to get warts from others; they are contagious and usually enter the body in an area of broken skin. They typically disappear after a few months but can last for years and can reoccur.

The normal action of cantharidin is to form a blister underneath the lesion. The blister formation causes removal of the molluscum or wart. On occasion, a blister may be painful, irritated or itch.

As a general rule, patients can expect the following:

2-3 HOURS: wash off the medication with soap and water (if clear tape was placed over the lesion remove it at this time). **This is important because this amount of time will control the amount of blistering. If there is a stinging sensation prior to 2 hours, wash off the medication immediately.** Placement of the clear tape may cause a blister to form earlier (see 4 DAYS).

4 HOURS: discomfort may occur; control with bathing and medication (see below).

24 HOURS: Blisters usually fully formed. Occasionally, there may be some blood in the blister fluid; **don't be alarmed** at this.

4 DAYS: Crusted blisters fall off leaving superficial abrasions. The skin may look raw and red. This is normal. You can apply Vaseline twice daily to the open areas until healed.

7 DAYS: Healed with temporary residual redness.

Possible side effects of Cantharidin treatment:

- 1) **Mild to moderate pain**
Please use Tylenol
- 2) **Burning sensation**
Please use cold water or ice water compresses to relieve this
- 3) **Itching/Eczema**
You may use a 1% cortisone ointment should there be an itchy rash or eczema twice daily for 5 days. Over the counter antihistamines (Benedryl, Zyrtec) can also be helpful. If the itching persists, please call your doctor for further advice.
- 4) **Post Treatment hypo-pigmentation, or hyper-pigmentation**
This can take weeks/months to resolve. No treatment needed.
- 5) **Recurrence**
If the lesions remain, or if new lesions appear, we can repeat the treatment after a few weeks or discuss or treatments including liquid nitrogen, scraping with a curette, home application of a prescription topical medication, or no treatment.