

Calluses, corns and warts on feet

Tender skin lumps on the feet are usually caused by *calluses*, *corns* or *warts*. Calluses and corns are areas of skin that have thickened due to constant pressure, while warts are viral infections.

Calluses

What is a callus?

It is simply a thickening of skin caused by some form of repeated pressure and friction. It is usually not painful but can be uncomfortable. It is common on the sole of the foot over the base of the toes. A callus can be found on any part of the body, especially the hands or the knees. When a callus is pared, normal skin is found underneath.



Callus

What is the treatment?

- No treatment is necessary if it is painless.
- Proper footwear is necessary to prevent calluses. Choose shoes that are wide enough and have cushioned pads over the balls of the feet.
- Paring with a scalpel blade by your doctor gives relief. (Avoid using razor blades.)
- Filing with callus files or a pumice stone wears away the callus. Soften it by soaking it in water before peeling the skin.

Corns

What is a corn?

A corn is a small tender raised lump that is round and has a hard centre. Corns usually form over the toes—over the joints, between the toes and on the outside of the little toe. Sometimes they can be very painful. Paring reveals a white circular mass of old skin.



Corn

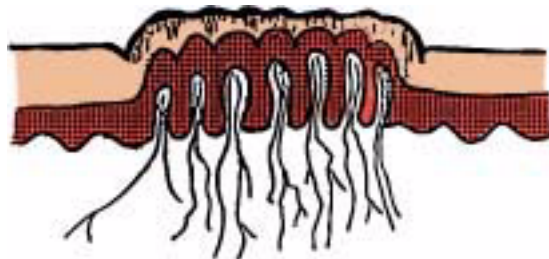
What is the treatment?

- The treatment is similar to that for a callus.
- A corn pad will reduce pressure.
- The corn can be softened with a chemical (salicylic acid) in commercial corn removers and then pared or peeled.
- Remove the source of friction if possible. Wear wide shoes—do not wear poor-fitting shoes. New shoes can be a cause, but your feet may adjust with stretching of the shoes.
- For soft corns between the toes (usually the last toe-web), keep the toe-webs separated with lamb's wool at all times and dust with a foot powder.

Warts

What is a plantar wart?

A *plantar wart* is a wart that has grown on the sole of the foot and then gets pressed into it by pressure. It feels like a stone in the shoe and can be quite painful. It is caused by a viral infection and is more common in children and young people, who may pick the virus up from public showers. When it is pared, small bleeding points are exposed. Plantar warts are more difficult to treat than corns and calluses.



Wart

What is the treatment?

Professional help is usually needed to treat these warts. Many methods can be used, such as freezing with liquid nitrogen, application of chemicals or surgical removal. Special cushions or pads should be worn inside the shoes to relieve pressure.