

DCP TREATMENT OF WARTS

What is DCP?

DCP stands for Diphenylcyclopropenone – a chemical used in the treatment of warts which are resistant to conventional therapy. Although it is not licensed for use in the United Kingdom, it has been used in the treatment of warts since 1984.

What does the treatment involve?

A small amount of 1 or 2% DCP solution is applied to the upper arm and covered with the dressing. This should remain in place for 48 hours [ie: 2 days]. The solution itself is colourless and odourless. It does not hurt but you may get an itchy patch of eczema about 1cm² at this site in about seven days. This is known as sensitisation and usually lasts seven to fourteen days.

Following sensitisation an area of temporarily darkened skin may be left. You may also be given a steroid ointment to apply to the eczema to reduce inflammation. This should be applied once or twice daily for up to a week until the reaction settles down.

Once the reaction has settled DCP is applied to the wart, starting at a low concentration, and you may have a second application on your upper arm. After each application the treated area is covered with a plaster and must stay in position for 48 hours. At subsequent visits gradually increasing concentrations of DCP will be applied to the warts. You will need to attend for treatment at maximum weekly or minimum every four weeks depending on the reaction produced. It may take several treatments before you get a response. You will be advised about filing warts prior to each treatment.

The average number of treatments is five to seven. Warts on the feet generally take longer to clear than warts on the hands. If there is no improvement in the number and size of warts after six months then the treatment is unlikely to work and may be discontinued.

How does the DCP work in the treatment of warts?

DCP works by boosting the natural immune response.

Side effects of DCP

Most patients have no problem with treatment. However you may get some itching or even blistering at the site of the application. This can be rapidly settled with the application of a topical steroid which will be prescribed if necessary.

Other problems are rare but may include:

- Local skin inflammation and eczema .
- Lymphadenopathy or swelling of lymph glands.
- Itching which may be severe enough to interrupt sleep on the night following treatment, but which is then well tolerated.
- Urticaria – itchy swellings in the skin which come and go.
- Fever or flu-like symptoms.
- Generalised eczema.
- Vitiligo or loss of skin colouration.
- Severe skin rashes.
- Skin reactions in partners or patients who come into contact with DCP.

Although harm to new born babies has not occurred, **female patients should use safe contraception and treatment with DCP should not be carried out in pregnancy.**

DCP is not known to be absorbed into the general circulation. **Blood tests are therefore not necessary.**