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## Podophyllotoxin for anogenital warts (Warticon)

Carefully follow the instructions from the pack for applying podophyllotoxin.

Wash your hands thoroughly after each application.

Do not use podophyllotoxin if you think you could be pregnant.

### About podophyllotoxin

Type of medicine	A plant extract for removing warts
Used for	Anogenital warts
Also called	Podofilox (in US); Warticon®
Available as	Cream and solution

You will have been prescribed podophyllotoxin to treat [anogenital warts](#). Anogenital warts are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV) which can be passed on by close sexual contact. They are small lumps that develop on the genitals and around the back passage (anus). Podophyllotoxin is a topical preparation which is applied directly to the surface of the wart. It works by preventing the wart cells from dividing, which stops them from increasing in number. As the wart cells die, new healthy tissue grows in their place.

### Before using podophyllotoxin

To make sure this is the right treatment for you, before you start using podophyllotoxin it is important that your doctor knows:

- If you are pregnant, trying for a baby or breastfeeding.
- If you have ever had an allergic reaction to podophyllotoxin.

## How to use podophyllotoxin

- Before you start the treatment, read the manufacturer's printed information leaflet from inside the pack and any additional information you are given by your doctor. These will give you more information about how to use podophyllotoxin and will provide you with a full list of the side-effects which you may experience from using it.
- Follow the instructions carefully when you are applying the cream/solution and do not apply more than the recommended amount. You will be asked to use the preparation twice daily (in the morning and the evening) for three consecutive days. This is then followed by four days without treatment. Your doctor is likely to ask you to repeat the three-day treatment followed by four days without treatment until the warts have gone, or alternatively for a total of 4-5 weeks.
- Wash your hands and the area to be treated with mild soap and water before applying the podophyllotoxin. Make sure your skin is dry before you apply the cream/solution.
- If you are using the solution, you will be given applicators to use. The applicator has an end with a 'loop' which allows you to treat individual warts. Dip the applicator into the bottle so that the hole is filled with solution, and then touch the wart with the applicator to transfer the solution to it. Allow the solution to dry. Some applicators have a 'spatula' end which is suitable for applying the solution to small collections of warts. If you are using the cream, apply it using a fingertip but remember to wash your hands thoroughly after each application.
- Do not put podophyllotoxin on any area of skin which is raw or bleeding, and be careful to avoid getting it on the healthy areas of skin around the warts. It is only to be used on the outside (external) skin - do not apply it to the inside of the vagina, penis or back passage.

- If the cream or solution comes into contact with any healthy areas of skin by accident, wash the area with water to remove it. Podophyllotoxin can be very irritant if any splashes get into the eyes by accident.

## Getting the most from your treatment

- When you have anogenital warts you will usually be advised to have tests to check for other sexually transmitted infections. Your doctor or clinic will arrange these for you.
- Sexual contact is not generally recommended while you are treating anogenital warts. You should ideally wait until your warts have gone and your skin has healed. If you do have sex, use a condom, as the warts can be passed to your partner and also the podophyllotoxin can cause irritation for your partner. It is also commonly advised that you use condoms for a time even after the warts have gone.
- Never use wart treatments that are sold over-the-counter in pharmacies to treat your anogenital warts.
- Solutions of podophyllotoxin are flammable. Do not use the solutions near a flame, and remember to keep the container closed when not in use.

## Can podophyllotoxin cause problems?

Along with their useful effects, most medicines can cause unwanted side-effects although not everyone experiences them. The table below contains some of the most common ones associated with podophyllotoxin. You will find a full list in the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with the cream/solution. The unwanted effects often improve as your body adjusts to the new medicine, but speak with your doctor or pharmacist if any of the following continue or become troublesome.

<p><b>Very common podophyllotoxin side-effects (these affect more than 1 in 10 people)</b></p>	<p><b>What can I do if I experience this?</b></p>
<p>Local irritation such as redness, itching, or burning</p>	<p>This typically occurs on the second or third day of application, but tends to be mild. If the area starts to bleed or becomes very painful, stop using the preparation and speak with your doctor for advice</p>

If you experience any other symptoms which you think may be due to podophyllotoxin, discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

## How to store podophyllotoxin

- Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store in a cool, dry place, away from direct heat and light.

# Important information about all medicines

Make sure that the person supplying this medicine knows about any other medicines that you are using. This includes any medicines you have bought, including herbal and homeopathic medicines.

This medicine is for you. Never give it to other people even if their condition appears to be the same as yours.

This preparation is for use on the skin only. If you suspect that someone has swallowed some of it, go to the accident and emergency department of your local hospital. Take the container with you, even if it is empty.

Do not keep out-of-date or unwanted medicines. Take them to your local pharmacy which will dispose of them for you.

If you are due to have an operation or any medical treatment, tell the person carrying out the treatment which medicines you are using.

If you have any questions about this medicine ask your pharmacist.

Report suspected side effects to medicines, vaccines, e-cigarettes, medical device incidents, defective or falsified (fake) products to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to ensure safe and effective use.

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## Further reading

- [Manufacturer's PIL, Warticon® 0.15% w/w Cream](#); Phoenix Labs, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated September 2019.
- [Manufacturer's PIL, Warticon® 0.5% w/v Solution](#); Phoenix Labs, The electronic Medicines Compendium. Dated May 2020.

- [Medicines Complete BNF 87th Edition](#); British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London.

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