



# Duct Tape for Warts: Old Wine in new Bottles

**"Duct tape is like the Force: It has a dark side and a light side and it holds the universe together." - Carl Zwanzig**

Warts (*verruca vulgaris*), a common complaint of young people caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV) can occur any place on the skin or even mucous membranes. Although 2/3 of warts in children will spontaneously disappear, this may take 2-3 years and many children and parents are not willing to wait that long.

There are many treatments for warts; and none are 100% effective. In addition, a number of office treatments are painful and expensive. Tape occlusion was first described in 1978 by Dr. Jerome Litt, but it never caught on. The first controlled study on taping warts was reported in October of 2002 (see reference). We have summarized the paper here for those who are interested.

## Method

- **Cover the wart with duct tape for six to seven days** and then remove the tape. Make sure that the duct tape is wrapped securely. If the tape falls off, apply a new piece as soon as you can.
- **Soak** the wart in warm water after removing the tape.
- **Use an emery board or pumice stone** to gently grind away the wart.
- **Leave the tape off overnight** to give your skin a rest.
- **Reapply the tape the next morning** and again keep the tape on for six to seven days. Again, soak the wart and grind it down, and leave the tape off overnight. Repeat this cycle until you follow up in clinic. You are likely to see at least some improvement after two to three weeks.
- **Return to my clinic** in four to six weeks for debriding of the wart. This means that I will recheck the wart area, and if the wart is still there I will painlessly shave away the remaining wart.

This is real "advance" in wart therapy. It is nice not to see a patient leave the office in pain; especially when the unpleasantness is no more likely to lead to a cure; indeed it may be less successful than simple taping.

Please do not hesitate to email our office with questions or suggestions.

**Prepared by Drs. David Elpern and Kenneth Fowler**

10 Meadow Street, Williamstown, Massachusetts 01467



**12 Meadow Street, Williamstown, Massachusetts 01267**

**1-413-458-2800 - email: [kauai@bcn.net](mailto:kauai@bcn.net)**

