

Treatment of Viral Warts with Intralesional Bleomycin

What is Bleomycin?

Bleomycin is a chemical which stops cells reproducing and dividing. It is injected in to the wart in a very small amount. It is not given by mouth or in the veins in our Department.

When is Bleomycin used?

Bleomycin is used to treat viral warts on the hands and feet which have persisted for prolonged periods of time and have not responded to conventional therapies such as wart paints/gels and cryotherapy (freezing treatments). Before Bleomycin is used you will be reviewed by a Dermatology Doctor or Consultant to see if Bleomycin is the right treatment for you.

How is Bleomycin used?

- On the day you come the wart may be shaved down using a scalpel blade.
- The area around the wart and the wart will be given an injection of local anaesthetic. This will help it to go numb which will make it less painful when the Bleomycin is injected.
- The wart will then be given an injection of Bleomycin.
- The wart may be covered with a light dressing which can be removed after a few hours.
- The wart should be kept dry for 24 hours.

What are the common side effects of the treatment?

- Pain following treatment: this varies from person to person. Usually there is mild to moderate discomfort which may last up to 3 days. Occasionally the discomfort can be more severe and last for up to 2 weeks. Regular painkillers such as paracetamol should be taken as necessary.
- Redness: the area around the wart can get red for a few days after the treatment
- Bleeding: this is common during the treatment and just after the treatment. It usually settles down after a few minutes.
- Infection: this is very uncommon but if you notice the area becoming more red, more painful or a discharge then contact us for advice.
- Colour change: sometimes the wart will become black and form a scab. This usually falls off within 4 weeks.

What are the risks of the treatment?

- Haematoma: this is a blood clot in the wart. It will usually settle down by itself.

Treatment of Viral Warts with Intralesional Bleomycin

- Tingling: in or around the area may develop. This usually settles down by itself.
- Scarring: the skin may become darker or paler once the wart has gone. A scar may develop which can sometimes be raised.
- Nails: injections around the nails may cause nails to be lost or damaged.
- On very rare occasions there can be an allergic reaction.

How many treatments will be needed?

The number of treatments you will need will depend on how quickly the wart responds to the treatment. Most patients will need 4 treatments.

How often is the treatment given?

Treatments are usually given every 4-6 weeks.

Contact Details:

Dermatology Day Treatment Clinic 01603 288386
Mon – Fri 0830-1800

Dermatology Out Patients Department 01603 288411

