VERRUCAE

What is it?

A verruca is a type of wart which affects the feet and is caused by a virus.

How do I know someone has it?

A verruca is a black spot which can vary in shape and size. Often the skin will be slightly raised and hardened and the contour lines of the skin will deviate around the spot. Sometimes it is painful to stand or walk on a verruca; this is caused by pressure on the nerves in the skin when the verruca becomes bulky.

Is it infectious?

Yes. Verrucae are infectious by contact with the virus left on damp or wet surfaces, eg baths, swimming pools. School age children and young adults are more often affected. Other bare foot activities, in the gym for example, may also favour the spread of verrucae.

What is the incubation period?

2 to 3 months is common but longer is possible.

Is there any treatment?

Verrucae normally disappear without any treatment in months or years. If the verruca is painful, very large or there are lots of them, the treatment might be necessary. It is best first to visit your GP before buying treatments over the counter. Your GP may treat you himself or occasionally send you to the hospital Out Patient department or podiatrist (chiropodist).

What should I do if someone has a verruca?

- Cover the verruca with a rubber sock or waterproof plaster when the foot is going to become wet or damp, eg swimming.
- Visit your GP if the verruca is sore.
- Follow the instructions on any prescribed treatments. Some of these are acid based and should be used as instructed.
- Avoid sharing bath mats whilst the verruca is present.

How soon can someone return to school or work?

A person does not need to stay away from school or work and can go swimming if the verruca is covered with a waterproof plaster.