

# Warts

Warts are caused by the papillomavirus, and they usually appear as blemishes on the face, mouth, or nose regions in younger horses. They appear as either single warts, or as clusters of warts that have a "cauliflower" appearance. While unsightly, they usually pose no threat to the horse's overall health and are considered merely a cosmetic blemish. In most cases, the warts will disappear on their own in a matter of time. But it is important to remember that warts are a viral, contagious disease and that proper steps should be taken in order to prevent them from spreading from one horse to another, especially if the horse is kept near other horses.

Younger horses are more susceptible to warts because they have less-efficient immune systems than older horses. The good news is that once a horse has been infected, it builds up an immunity and is less susceptible to future infections. Provided the horse is in good physical condition, has a good nutrition program, is wormed regularly, and is under good management, the warts should disappear within six to nine months. Short-term, the warts will not reappear because of the immunity the horse has developed for the virus.

If a horse becomes affected with warts, it is best to keep it away from other horses as much as possible. Also, as a general management practice do not use the same equipment such as brushes, halters, bridles, etc., on both infected and non-infected horses. While there might be no way to really isolate the infected horse, good hygiene practices will help keep the warts from spreading.

Complications that can arise as a result of warts are secondary, but they do sometimes occur. Some of the most common secondary problems arise because the warts are banged or scraped on barn

doors, fences, halters, bridles, etc. When this happens, it creates an open sore on the wart that could allow a secondary infection to enter the open wound. During hot months, "summer sores" can become superimposed on the warts if the wart has been rubbed raw. There also is the possibility that maggots or larvae might invade damaged warts.

The only time warts become dangerous is when a horse has an immune deficiency such as CID, which compromises the immune system. In these cases, the warts could become much more extensive and cover wider areas of the body because the animal's immune system will not contribute to self-curing.

Ultimately, warts are a fairly trivial disease, provided the horse is given good nutrition and care. In most circumstances, the infection is self-limiting and there should be no complications. Since warts are caused by a highly contagious virus, if the horse is stabled with other animals, then common-sense hygiene should be utilized because warts appear more often in this type of situation.

**Warts on Horses Nose**

