



## Corns or Warts: How Can You Tell the Difference?

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**Corns and calluses** are virtually the same thing, a thickening of the skin that forms in response to too much pressure. Commonly the larger areas forming under the ball of the foot are called calluses, and the smaller ones with a hard “core” are referred to as corns. These can form when there is too much pressure typically under one bone in the ball of the foot when it is lower than another. They can also form on the tops or tips of toes when there are hammertoes. The most important thing to understand, is that there are **NO roots to a corn or callus**. If there were a root, then removing the center of the corn would prevent it from coming back. The root of the problem is pressure from a bone out of alignment, metatarsal or hammertoe, pressure from the top of the shoe, or pressure from wearing heels.



**Warts** are caused by a virus. They can look similar to a corn, but the wart is frequently more elevated, interrupts the normal skin lines, may increase in size and number grouped in a small area, and will bleed when trimmed superficially.

**Seed Corns** these are very tiny, are sometimes grouped, and can be very painful. They are often confused with warts, as they can be grouped, but like other corns they really don't have a root and will not go away easily.

### Treatment of Corns and Calluses

- Trimming of corns and calluses will bring temporary relief, along with padding or use of pads to offload the corn that have the center cut out. Toe separators may be used to alleviate the pressure causing corns between toes. **Do Not use medicated corn pads or liquid corn remover** containing salicylic acid. It is the fastest way to developing a severe inflammation or infection. If you have hammertoes, you may need shoes with a deeper toe box.
- Seed corns are thought to be caused by very dry skin. They require professional care to restore the skin to a healthier deeper layer, and then begin an aggressive moisturizing program.
- Warts are treated with many different methods. Before treating a wart, you should first see your podiatrist to be sure that this is the correct diagnosis. The treatment method chosen is based upon the degree of pain present, whether the number of warts is increasing, and must be matched to each individual's work and play schedule. Warts can be very resistant to treatment, and it is not uncommon for more than one approach to be utilized to resolve them completely.