

Skin cancer caused by pitch and tar



This is a web-friendly version of pocket card INDG435(formerly MSB4), first published 09/09

People who work, or have worked, with pitch and tar sometimes get warts on their faces, necks, hands, arms, or scrotum (the bag which contains the testicles).

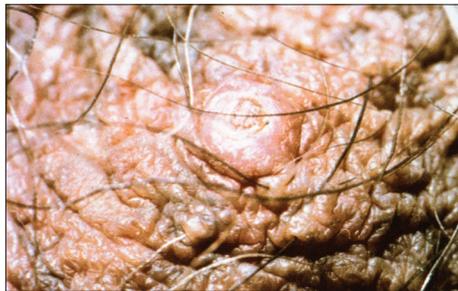
You might get a wart after only a few months in the industry, but it usually takes years for a wart to develop.

There are several kinds of tar wart, but one of them is **cancer** and will not go away unless it is treated. It is however, easily cured by prompt treatment.

If you work in contact with pitch or tar and develop a wart or a little sore that does not heal, go to your doctor. If it occurs on the scrotum it is a serious danger and **delay is dangerous**.

The scrotum is at special risk. Examine it each time you have a bath. If you feel a patch of hard skin or a little lump, it could be a dangerous wart.

Go at once to your doctor and take this leaflet with you.



This is a tar wart on the scrotum. It is cancer and it was cured.



This is a tar wart on the eyelid. It is cancer and it was cured.

If you work with pitch or tar, **watch out for warts**.

If you used to work with pitch or tar, **watch out for warts**.

You could work with pitch or tar for many years without getting a wart, and then get one years after you leave the work, so **watch out for warts**.

General precautions

- Keep pitch and tar off your skin.
- Wear protective clothing.
- If you have a protective device, such as a dust extractor, use it.
- Change your underclothes often.
- Change your working clothes often, because tar works its way in.
- Do not put any dirty rags, tools or other materials contaminated with pitch and tar in your trouser pockets.
- Wash your hands before going to the toilet.
- Make sure that you have a bath or shower after work.
- **Watch out for warts.**

Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk/. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

This pocket card was prepared by the Employment Medical Advisory Committee and was agreed by the Health and Safety Commission. It contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

This leaflet is available in priced packs of 25 from HSE Books, ISBN 978 0 7176 6377 4. A web version can be found at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg435.pdf.

© *Crown copyright* If you wish to reuse this information visit www.hse.gov.uk/copyright.htm for details. First published 09/09.