

WHAT THE WART?!

In the last few weeks we have seen a surge of puppies with strange looking warts around their muzzle and inside their mouth!

Although these cauliflower-like warts are alarming to the pet owner, here is some information to put your mind at ease.

What are they?

These Warts are known as viral papillomas. The most common type of viral papilloma in dogs is caused by CPV1 (canine papilloma virus-1). Typically this virus affects the lips and muzzle of a young dog (usually less than 2 years of age). Less commonly, papillomas can occur on the eyelids and even the surface of the eye or between the toes.

They tend to occur in groups rather than as solitary growths - so if you see one, have a look in the mouth and you will likely find more !

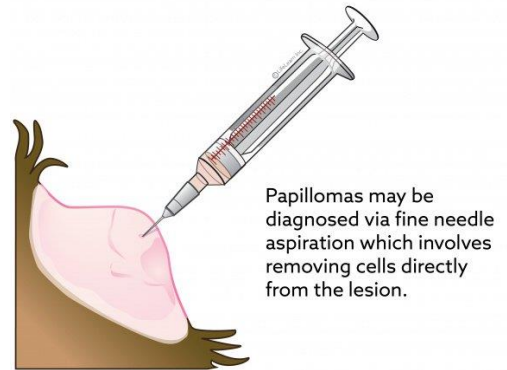


Viral papillomas have a very classic appearance (like this photo) and often do not require a biopsy for diagnosis. In cases of uncertainty a biopsy can confirm diagnosis.

How is it treated?



Most papillomas will regress on their own in 1-2 months **without** treatment. This is because the animal develops an immunity to the virus. Crushing of these warts with local anesthesia is also seen as an effective method of stimulating the immune system and debulking the warts. If lesions are still there after 3 months and an aspirate or biopsy may be needed to confirm that the growth really is a viral papilloma and surgical removal is indicated. Sometimes oral papillomas can become infected with bacteria from the mouth. Antibiotics will be needed in such cases to control the pain, swelling, and bad breath.



How does it spread?

The infection is transmitted through direct contact with the papillomas on an infected dog or the virus in the environment (toys, bowls, bedding etc). To become infected the dog needs an immature immune system, making this infection primarily one of young dogs and puppies. Dogs taking immune system modulating drugs are also at risk of an outbreak.

Can humans get them?!

NO!

The papilloma virus cannot be transmitted to people as it is very species-specific. While normal hygiene should be maintained when handling animals you are safe from getting this virus !

Do not stress !

Typically these warts do not irritate your dog's mouth - it is recommended to try and prevent your pet from rubbing, scratching, licking, or biting the papilloma(s), as this can cause inflammation, ulceration, infection, and bleeding. If there are any ulcerated warts it is important to keep them clean!

If you have any questions, concerns or feel like a 'worry wart' do not hesitate to reach out to one of our friendly vets at Vet HQ!

Dr Ashley

