After application, it dries to become a thin adhesive film on the skin. Gels with high solvent content are called jellies. These are used on mucous membranes to protect lesions from friction.

5. Powders

The main ingredients of powders are zinc oxides, talc (magnesium silicate), and starches. Powders dry affected sites by absorbing moisture. They also cool the skin, reduce friction, and smooth the skin surface. They are effective in preventing miliaria and intertrigo.

6. Liniments

Liniments are mixtures of water and zinc oxides, phenol or glycerin. They dry fast on the skin. They are effective in cooling the skin and relieving itching. Carboric acid liniments are used for erythema and papules of, for instance, varicella; however, they must be avoided for lesions with moist surfaces, because of their water solubility.

7. Pastes

Pastes are highly viscous mixtures of oil-based substances and microparticles of powder. In this they resemble oleaginous ointments; however, pastes contain more powder than oleaginous ointments do.

8. Plasters

Plasters are cloth, paper, or plastic film spread with topical agents. One example is 30% salicylic acid plaster. They are applied to lesions such as callus and clavus (Fig. 6.3). Adhesive plasters containing steroids are also useful. Adhesive plasters with nitroglycerine or fentanyl are used for systemic administration in non-dermatological medical departments, utilizing the transdermal absorption of the skin.

9. Other vehicles for topical agents

These include compresses, soaps, shampoos and bath additives.

b. Main topical agents

The main agents are the components that have therapeutic effects on skin. Frequently used main agents are listed below.

1. Corticosteroids (steroid)

The main purpose of steroid topical application is to fight