

Patient Information for Lipoma - Skin in Child/Adult

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Overview

A lipoma is a soft lump just under your skin made of fat cells. It grows slowly between the skin and muscle. It is not cancerous. Lipomas can grow anywhere on your body where there are fat cells.

Who's At Risk

Lipomas tend to run in families. If someone you're related to has lipomas, you have a greater chance of lipoma growth. Lipomas are rare in children. They usually begin growing in middle age.

The cause of lipomas is unknown. However, obese individuals and people with diseases such as diabetes, high blood cholesterol, and some inherited disorders may be at higher risk of developing lipomas.

Signs & Symptoms

Lipomas feel doughy and do not hurt to touch. A lipoma is not hard and you may be able to move it with your fingers. There is no color change to the skin.

The size and body location can vary, but the neck, shoulders, chest, thighs, arms, and back are common locations. There may be several lipomas growing at the same time, but usually people develop one or two at once.

Self-Care Guidelines

Lipomas are not harmful and are not signs of cancer. They do not require treatment.

When to Seek Medical Care

Sometimes a lipoma may grow in a location on your body that makes you uncomfortable, such as on your face or near a bundle of nerves. A medical professional can remove a lipoma if its growth is bothering you.

If the lipoma is growing very fast, does not move to your touch, seems deeper than just under your skin, or causes you pain, see your doctor to make sure you actually have a lipoma.

Treatments Your Physician May Prescribe

Your doctor may perform a biopsy to confirm that you have a lipoma. A sample of the fatty tissue will be analyzed by a lab or your physician will look at the sample under a microscope to make sure it is only fatty tissue.

If your lipoma is uncomfortable, you and your doctor may decide to remove it. A very small incision is made over the lipoma, and the entire lipoma can be removed through the small opening.

If the lipoma is large, it can be removed with liposuction to prevent a scar. A needle and syringe are used to remove the fatty tissue.