



PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

DERMATOFIBROMA

What are the aims of this leaflet?

This leaflet has been written to help you understand more about dermatofibromas. It will tell you what they are, what causes them, what can be done about them, and where you can find out more about them.

What is a dermatofibroma?

A dermatofibroma is a common overgrowth of the fibrous tissue situated in the dermis (the deeper of the two main layers of the skin). It is quite harmless and will not turn into a cancer. Another name for dermatofibroma is histiocytoma.

What causes a dermatofibroma to appear?

This is not clear. However they often seem to come up after a minor injury to the skin such as a prick from a thorn or an insect bite.

Are dermatofibromas hereditary?

No.

What are the symptoms of a dermatofibroma?

Usually the only problem is with how they look. Occasionally they itch or hurt when touched or knocked. If they are on the legs, shaving the skin over them can cause bleeding.

What do dermatofibromas look like?

- They are firm bumps that feel like small rubbery buttons lying just under the surface of the skin. They are seldom more than 1 cm. across. They lie within the skin and so move with it. A dimple may appear over them when they are pinched.
- Their colour ranges from pink to brown.
- They can crop up anywhere, but are most common on the lower legs of young or middle-aged adults and on the upper arms of women.
- Most people with a dermatofibroma will have only one; some people will have several; but it is very unusual to have large numbers of them. Women get them more often than men.

How will it be diagnosed?

A doctor can usually identify a dermatofibroma easily by the way it looks. However, if there is doubt about the diagnosis, or worries over the possibility of skin cancer, the bump can be removed under a local anaesthetic and looked at under the microscope.

Can a dermatofibroma be cured?

Yes, by removal under local anaesthetic.

How can a dermatofibroma be treated?

Dermatofibromas do not go away by themselves. However, as they are harmless and cause little trouble, no treatment is usually needed apart from an accurate diagnosis and reassurance.

Removal under a local anaesthetic will always leave a scar, which may be as obvious as the original lump.

Removal may be worthwhile if:

- The dermatofibroma is unsightly and you are prepared to swap it for a scar.
- It is a nuisance and causing symptoms such as itching or pain – though these symptoms may settle with time.
- There are any doubts about the diagnosis.

What can I do?

Anyone who develops a new lump in their skin, particularly if it is pigmented, should ask their doctor to have a look at it.

Where can I get more information?

Links to other Internet sites:

www.dermnetnz.org/dna.dermatofibroma/dermfib.html

(Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the information given in this leaflet is accurate, not every treatment will be suitable or effective for every person. Your own doctor will be able to advise in greater detail.)

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