

Removing Benign Skin Lesions

GS05 Lite - Expires end of January 2023



This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What are skin lesions?

Skin lesions are lumps found on or just below your skin. Examples of skin lesions are sebaceous cysts (also called epidermal inclusion cysts or epidermoid cysts), lipomas, skin tags (also called acrochorda) and moles.

What are the benefits of surgery?

Most skin lesions can be safely left alone. You may want the skin lesion removed for cosmetic reasons or to be reassured that it is not a cancer.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

Surgery is the only reliable way to remove skin lesions but you may simply leave them alone.

What does the operation involve?

The operation is usually performed under a local anaesthetic.

The operation usually takes 15 to 25 minutes.

When removing a sebaceous cyst, your surgeon will try to remove it whole as this makes sure that none of the cyst wall is left behind and prevents it from coming back. Your surgeon will make an elliptical (oval) cut over the cyst and then cut out the cyst.

To remove a lipoma, your surgeon will make a straight cut on your skin directly over it. The lipoma is freed up from the tissues around it and removed.

A skin tag can simply be numbed with local anaesthetic and then removed.

When removing a mole, your surgeon will cut all the way around it using an elliptical cut.

What complications can happen?

General complications of any operation

- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Wound breakdown

Specific complications of this operation

- A lipoma or a sebaceous cyst can come back

- Damage to nerves that supply your skin
- You may need a larger operation

Consequences of this procedure

- Pain
- Unsightly scarring of your skin

How soon will I recover?

After a short while you will be able to go home.

You should be able to return to work the next day unless your work will place a strain on the stitches. It is unusual for these procedures to restrict any daily activities you carry out.

Summary

Skin lesions are common and can be treated by surgery.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you.

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Acknowledgements

Reviewers: Ayan Banerjea (FRCS), Simon Parsons (DM, FRCS)
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Removing a sebaceous cyst