



What are Benign Growths?

These benign growths may represent a nuisance for you or they may mimic the appearance of a skin cancer. Your comfort is our goal here at PC dermatology. Dr. Al-Dabagh will work with you to find the best option for the removal of:

Cysts

An epidermoid cyst (sometimes incorrectly termed as a sebaceous cyst) forms after skin debris plugs a pore. These cysts appear yellow or white with the appearance of a blackhead in the center. When squeezed, it produces a white discharge that usually has a foul odor. This discharge is not pus but actually dead skin cells.

They are not harmful or cancerous. As long as the cyst is not bothersome or growing, it does not need treatment. However, if the cyst enlarges, drains, or becomes painful, it could rupture and potentially become infected. In this case, we recommend seeing a us or another dermatologist for possible treatment.

Milia

These small cysts appear as tiny white bumps around the eyelids and cheeks. They are common in adults who apply heavy, oil-based skin care products. No treatment is necessary for these lesions however if they become cosmetically bothersome, we can offer various treatments.

Dermatofibroma

A dermatofibroma is a small, pink or brown growth that often occurs after an insect bite, pimple or other minor injury. Dermatofibromas may feel firm to the touch, yet the overlying skin puckers when squeezed. These growths usually appear on legs but can also be seen on other body parts. Since dermatofibromas form after previous trauma, removal is not recommended as they are prone to recur.

Lipomas

These rubber-like lumps are NOT cancer. Lipomas are non-cancerous tumors consisting of fat deep within the skin. Lipomas can be small or large and sometimes feel tender to the touch. No treatment is required unless they become larger or painful.

Cherry Angiomas

These growths are small, bright red or purple, and made up of tiny blood vessels. Cherry angiomas can be small but are capable of growing to the size of a pencil eraser. Some people have hundreds of cherry angiomas, which can appear anywhere on the body. In some cases, larger angiomas may be removed if they begin to bleed.

Moles

Moles are round, flat or slightly-raised growths. They can vary in color and appear skin-colored, brown, pink, red, and black. Moles should always retain the same color and appearance from month to month.

If you notice a mole changing, itching or bleeding, it is important to see your dermatologist. Melanoma is the most dangerous form of skin cancer and can sometimes develop from an already pre-existing mole. Moles can be removed and sent to a laboratory for a definitive diagnosis, if skin cancer is suspected. However, moles can also be removed if they are simply irritating or you are uncomfortable with their appearance.

Neurofibromas

Neurofibromas appear as soft bumps along the skin, mimicking a mole or skin tag. These benign tumors form from tissue surrounding nerves and therefore form along the pathway of a nerve. If you have multiple neurofibromas, your dermatologist may talk to you about underlying medical conditions associated with several neurofibromas.

Sebaceous Hyperplasia

These growths are small, yellow or white bumps and often have a small groove in the center or small blood vessels around them. They are caused by enlarged or clogged oil glands. Sebaceous hyperplasia, however, can mimic the appearance of a skin cancer called basal cell

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carcinoma. It may be necessary for your dermatologist to perform a biopsy to rule out any potential malignancy.

Sebaceous Keratoses

Seborrheic keratoses generally have a dry stuck-on appearance similar to a wart. Their color ranges from brown to black. These growths are a very common and occur as we age ('over 29 spot'). A seborrheic keratosis can look similar to a melanoma, but a trained dermatologist can usually identify these growths by examining them. A biopsy is rarely necessary.

Skin Tags

A skin tag is a small, limp, skin-colored growth commonly found around the neck, armpits and other skin folds. Skin tags can become irritated by rubbing against clothing or jewelry. Dr. Al-Dabagh can discuss removal options with you if you have skin tags that are uncomfortable. These lesions are otherwise benign and no treatment is necessary.

How are common growths treated?

Most skin growths can be removed by excision (cutting), cryotherapy (freezing with liquid nitrogen), curettage (scraping), electrodesiccation (burning), or biopsy. Due to the benign nature of these lesions, no treatment is generally necessary if the growth is not irritating or concerning for skin cancer. Cosmetic removal of a growth may not be covered by your health insurance. Be sure to speak with your dermatologist or insurance provider if you are concerned about the cost of removal.