

GS05lite Removing Benign Skin Lesions

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This document will give you information about removing benign skin lesions. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What are skin lesions?

Skin lesions are lumps found on or just below your skin. Examples of skin lesions are epidermoid cysts, lipomata, skin tags and moles.

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 usually takes 15 to 25 minutes. When removing an epidermoid cyst, your surgeon will make an elliptical (oval) cut over the cyst and then cut out the cyst (see figure 1).

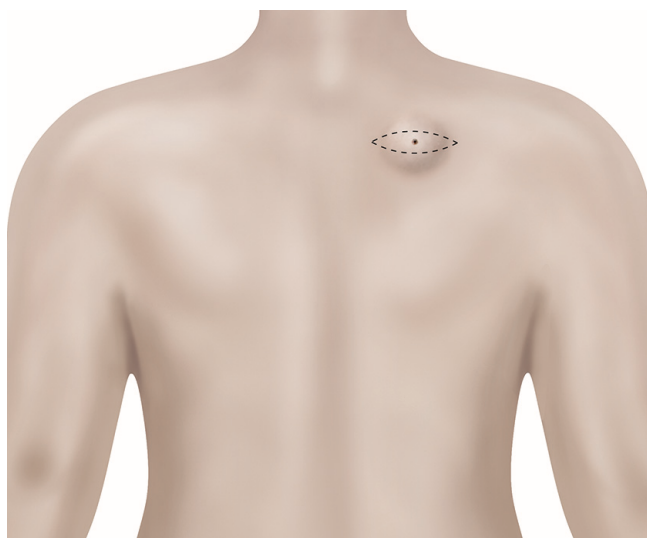


Figure 1
Removing an epidermoid cyst

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 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?

1 General complications

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Unsightly scarring
- Wound breakdown, if your skin fails to heal

2 Specific complications

- A lipoma or an epidermoid cyst can come back
- Damage to nerves
- You may need a larger operation

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home a short while after the operation.

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.

Acknowledgements

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