

SKIN TAGS

Overview

Skin tags are small, usually harmless (benign) skin growths. The only symptom is a growth on the skin. The growth (tag) is usually small, although some may be up to a half-inch long. Other characteristics include:

- Located on the neck, armpits, trunk, body folds, or other areas
- May have a narrow stalk
- Usually skin-colored, occasionally darker

Treatment

Treatment is usually not necessary unless the skin tags are irritating or are cosmetically displeasing. The growths may be removed by surgery, by freezing (cryotherapy), or by electrical burn (cautery).

Causes

Skin tags are very common skin growths. They usually occur after midlife and are usually harmless and non-cancerous (benign). The tag sticks out of the skin, and may have a short, narrow stalk connecting it to the surface of the skin. Skin tags are usually painless and do not grow or change. However, they may be irritated from rubbing by clothing or other materials. Skin tags are more common in people who are overweight or who have diabetes. They are thought to occur from skin rubbing against skin, so they commonly form in skin folds.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis is based primarily on the appearance of the skin growth. Occasionally, a biopsy may be needed to diagnose an unusual looking skin tag.

Prognosis

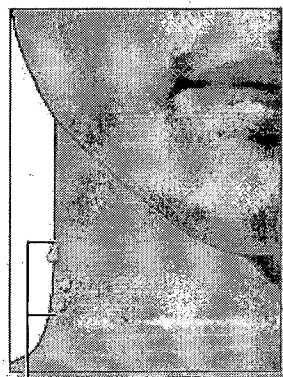
Skin tags are generally benign and usually not bothersome. They may become irritated or cosmetically displeasing. There is usually no regrowth or scar formation after skin tags are removed, although new growths may appear elsewhere on the body.

Complications

There are usually no complications. Occasionally, irritation and discomfort may occur. If cut, they can bleed excessively. The skin tags may be cosmetically unsightly.

When to contact a doctor

Call your doctor if you have skin tags and you want them removed, or if the appearance of a skin tag changes.



Skin tags

Super-freezing of skin tag tissue (cryotherapy)

