

SKIN TAGS

“Skin tags are small, benign growths of skin that commonly develop in areas where skin rubs against skin or clothing, such as the neck, armpits, groin, under the breasts, and eyelids. They are also known as acrochordons, soft fibromas, or fibroepithelial polyps. These harmless growths typically appear as flesh-colored, brown, or red flaps attached by a thin stalk and range in size from 1 mm to 1 cm, though some can grow up to 1.3 cm (½ inch).

Why They Develop:

Friction is the primary cause—skin rubbing together in folds increases the risk.

Common risk factors include:

Obesity or skin folds

Type 2 diabetes and insulin resistance

Hormonal changes (e.g., during pregnancy)

Age—more common after 40, with prevalence rising to 50–60% of adults.

Genetics—a family history increases likelihood.

Emerging research links multiple skin tags to metabolic syndrome, dyslipidemia, and cardiovascular risk.

Are Skin Tags Cancerous?

No, skin tags are not cancerous and have no malignant potential. However, if a skin tag changes in color, shape, size, or starts bleeding, it should be evaluated by a dermatologist to rule out other skin conditions.

When to Seek Medical Advice

See a doctor if:

A skin tag becomes painful, inflamed, or infected

It bleeds without injury

It grows rapidly or changes appearance

You're unsure if it's a skin tag (e.g., may resemble a mole or wart)

Treatment and Removal

Skin tags do not require removal unless they're bothersome. Removal is safe and effective when done by a healthcare provider using methods such as:

Cryotherapy (freezing)

Electrocautery (burning)

Surgical excision (cutting with scissors or scalpel)

Ligation (tying off the blood supply)

Home remedies (e.g., over-the-counter "skin tag removers") are not medically supported and may cause irritation or scarring. Removal is usually not covered by the NHS or insurance unless symptomatic.

Prevention

While not always preventable, reducing friction and maintaining a healthy weight may lower risk. Avoid tight clothing or jewelry that rubs against skin folds.

Note: If you're experiencing a sudden increase in skin tags, it may signal underlying metabolic issues like insulin resistance or diabetes—consult a healthcare provider for evaluation.”

AI-generated answer. Please verify critical facts.

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