

Skin Tags

DIAGNOSIS:

A skin tag (acrochordon) is a small, soft, flesh-colored to dark brown growth that is either sessile or pedunculated. Skin tags are more common with increasing age. They appear most often in skin folds of the neck, axillae, trunk, beneath the breasts, and in the groin area. They can become irritated by clothing or jewelry rubbing against them. As a result of twisting on the stalk, they may become inflamed or tender, or necrotic.

If a skin tag is immobile, is a different color than surrounding skin, is multicolored, has raw bleeding areas, or you are not certain of the diagnosis, then send the specimen for pathologic evaluation.

REFERRING PROVIDER:

- Skin tags can usually be clipped off at the base using sharp scissors or a sharp blade. This method is best for tags with a thin stalk. No anesthesia is required, and lesions often do not bleed. If bleeding occurs, it can be stopped with aluminum chloride or light electrodesiccation.
- For lesions with a thicker stalk, local anesthesia is recommended.
- Some patients and some doctors prefer cryotherapy with liquid nitrogen. Liquid nitrogen can be applied using two cotton-tipped applicators to trap the tag or try pick-ups or forceps dipped in liquid nitrogen. Continue to apply liquid nitrogen until the tag is white. Allow the tag to thaw before repeating the process once.
- Large numbers of small tags may be treated quickly by electrodesiccation.

WHEN TO REFER:

- Diagnosis uncertain.
- Concern about cosmetic removal
- Concern for treatment resulting in post-inflammatory hypopigmentation/hyperpigmentation