

Dermatofibroma

What is a dermatofibroma?

This is a benign non-cancerous growth of the cells in the deeper part of the skin, called the dermis.

What do dermatofibroma look like?

Dermatofibroma can occur at any site but are especially common on the lower leg, arms and back. They appear as light brown firm lumps in the skin and are more common in women than men. It is not uncommon to develop several dermatofibroma at different body sites. They often itch and irritate for the first 18 months. This generally settles down with time and they may spontaneously resolve.

What causes dermatofibroma?

We do not generally know why some people develop dermatofibroma. However, they occasionally develop following insect bites and minor trauma.

What treatment is necessary?

Dermatofibroma do not generally require treatment. It is extremely rare for them to change into skin cancers and they are not considered to be a serious health problem. Irritation and itching may be helped by applying a moisturiser cream or a mild topical steroid.

What treatments are effective?

Dermatofibroma involve the deeper layers of the skin and can only be effectively treated by removing them surgically. They do not go away with creams or freezing (cryotherapy). Surgery involves a small operation under a local anaesthesia. The dermatofibroma is then removed and the skin will need to be stitched back together.

What are the complications of surgery?

Many dermatofibroma occur on the lower leg. This is not a good site for having an operation because it is more likely to scar than other body sites. The cosmetic result may be more unsightly than the original skin lesion. Rarely, a raised scar (keloid) or a depressed scar may form. Infection and bleeding may also complicate surgery.