Lipoma (Fatty tumor)

A lipoma is a non-cancerous (*benign*) tumor composed of fat cells. These may occur in any tissue of the body that contains fat. They are usually found under the skin (*subcutaneous*). Lipomas are very common soft tissue growths. Most problems caused by a lipoma depend on where the fatty tumor (lump) is growing. Removal is usually the best option if the growth is enlarging. It can also be removed if it causes problems or to improve appearance.

DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis of a lipoma can be done with a physical exam. They are soft and grow slowly. X-rays including CT scans and MRI's may be used. Although these tumors rarely become cancerous, x-rays help determine this.

TREATMENT

Small fatty tumors that are not causing problems may often be watched. Removal is often the best treatment if a fatty tumor continues to enlarge and cause problems. Surgery removes the fatty cells and the surrounding capsule. Most often this is done by numbing the skin (*local anesthetic*). The specimen is examined under the microscope to ensure that it is just a lipoma and not cancerous.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Keep your follow-up appointments.
- See your caregiver if the lipoma grows in size.
- See your caregiver if you develop pain or problems you think are caused by the lipoma.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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