

Skin tag

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What is a skin tag?

A skin tag is a common soft harmless lesion that appears to hang off the skin. It is also described as:

- Acrochordon
- Papilloma
- Fibroepithelial polyp
- Soft fibroma
- Pedunculated (this means it is on a stalk)
- Filiform (this means it is thread-like)

Skin tags develop in both men and women as they grow older. They are skin coloured or darker and range in size from 1mm to 5cm. They are most often found in the skin folds (neck, armpits, groin). They tend to be more numerous in obese persons and in those with type 2 diabetes mellitus.

Skin tags



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Skin tags are made up of loosely arranged collagen fibres and blood vessels surrounded by a thickened or thinned-out epidermis.

[Seborrhoeic keratoses](#), [viral warts](#) or [molluscum contagiosum](#) may resemble skin tags.

Lesions resembling skin tags



Seborrhoeic keratosis



Seborrhoeic keratosis



Molluscum contagiosum

See more images of skin tags.

What causes skin tags?

It is not known what causes skin tags. However, the following factors may play a role:

- Chaffing and irritation from skin rubbing together

- Slipping and friction from skin rubbing together
- High levels of growth factors, particularly during pregnancy or in **acromegaly** (gigantism)
- Insulin resistance (syndrome X)
- Human papillomavirus (wart virus)

How can they be removed?

Skin tags can be removed for cosmetic reasons by the following methods:

- Cryotherapy (freezing)
- Surgical excision (often with scissors)
- Electrosurgery (diathermy)
- Ligation (a suture is tied around the neck of the skin tag)



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DermNet does not provide an online consultation service. If you have any concerns with your skin or its treatment, see a dermatologist for advice.