



ACROCHORDON (SKIN TAG)

Kathleen W. Judge, M.D.

Medical Director

*Diplomate American Board of Dermatology
Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery*

Skin tags are normal outgrowths of skin that usually develop in areas where there is some friction on the skin surface, such as where clothing rubs around the neck, under arms, beneath the breasts, on the upper inner thighs, or on the eyelids. There seems to be an inherited tendency to develop these growths and they are very common. They usually appear in adulthood as multiple soft flesh-colored to brown growths that are usually only attached to the skin surface by a thin stalk. Typically, they range from one to 5 mm, but occasionally they can become very large.

Skin tags can become irritated by clothing or jewelry, and if they are twisted or pinched so that their blood supply is impaired, they may turn red or black and eventually fall off. This is no cause for alarm. In fact, in the past they have been removed at home by tying a string around them to cause this to happen. Fortunately, now if they become irritated or if their removal is desired for cosmetic reasons, this may be done easily in the office by scissor excision, cryosurgery with liquid nitrogen, or electrodesiccation, possibly with prior local anesthetic if the tags are larger.

Please be aware that because these growths are benign, they continue to appear over time, and it is common for them to recur even after treatment, removal is not usually covered by insurance benefits. There is no way to prevent the growth of new lesions.