



Lipoma excision

Informed consent: patient information

1. What is a lipoma?

Lipomas are reasonably common, harmless, fatty lumps that are often located in the subcutaneous tissues (just below the skin) of the neck, chest, back, shoulders, arms, and thighs. Lipomas most commonly occur in middle-age but can be present at any age.

These slow growing, nearly always benign tumours are usually painless, round, mobile lumps with a characteristic soft, rubbery feel. Most lipomas are best left alone, but surgical removal is indicated if it is painful, increasing in size or for cosmetic reasons.

2. Lipoma removal consultation

A lipoma removal consultation is an opportunity to discuss the procedure in detail with Dr Woo who is going to be carrying out your procedure. Lipoma removal can then be planned at any time that is convenient to you. A lipoma removal consultation will also allow him to establish that the lesion is indeed a lipoma. Other types of skin lesion can mimic a lipoma including cysts, lymph nodes and skin tumours.

3. Do I require any investigations or tests before removal?

It is usually possible to tell a lipoma clinically before surgical removal. However, if the lump is very deep or large, your doctor may ask you to have an Ultrasound scan, or sometimes an MRI Scan. This allows further information of the lump to be ascertained such as how deep the lipoma is.

4. How do I prepare for the procedure?

Avoid taking Aspirin or anti-inflammatory tablets for seven days before the procedure.

If you choose to undergo general anaesthesia, you must not eat anything for 6 hours prior to your procedure (Please follow further instructions from the Hospital). You need to arrange for someone to drive you home from surgery.

5. What will happen during the procedure?

You will be given local anaesthesia to numb the surgery area. With local anaesthesia, you may still feel pressure or pushing, but you should not feel any pain. If your lipoma is large or deep, you may be given general anaesthesia.

After cleaning the area with antiseptics, Dr Woo will make an incision on the skin over the lump and remove the lipoma. The removed lipoma will be sent for histopathology test. The skin wound will likely be closed using a dissolvable stitch and covered with steri-strips and a waterproof dressing.

The procedure will take about 20-30 minutes.



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6. What are the risks of having a lipoma removal procedure?

Pain, bleeding, haematoma or seroma formation, surgical site infection, unsightly scarring, wound breakdown, recurrence, damage to surrounding structures

7. What is the aftercare and recovery following a lipoma removal?

You will be able to go home a short while after your surgery and return to work the next day unless your work will place a strain on the wound. You may have pain, swelling, or bruising where the lipoma was removed. These symptoms should get better in a few days. You can take simple analgesia such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen and apply ice pack.

You will keep the waterproof dressing intact for a week unless it is heavily stained or wet. You can dry the wound and put on new clean dressings as directed. You will need to make an appointment to see your GP in 7-10 days to review the wound and the histopathology report.

8. Contact your doctors if you notice:

- blood soaks through your dressing.
- the wound is red, swollen, or draining pus.