

# Lipoma Removal Surgery: What to Know

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## What is a lipoma?

A **lipoma** is a benign (non-cancerous) collection of fatty tissue that joins to form a mass or lump under the skin. Usually the lipoma is in the subcutaneous tissue-the innermost layer that contains fat cells, nerve endings, and hair follicle roots. Sometimes it is deeper in the muscle or other layers.

## How is it removed?

Most lipomas are removed under local anesthesia (medication used to reduce sensation in a specific part of the body). This means that a local anesthetic is injected into the skin and tissues around the lipoma to numb the area. The lipoma is then removed without you feeling very much. You will remain awake during the procedure. A nurse will be with you to monitor how you are doing.

If you have a very large lipoma or one that is in a particularly sensitive area, you might be scheduled to receive sedation during the procedure. If so, you will meet with the anesthesiologist before the procedure. The doctor will usually tell you if they think sedation will be needed.

The incision is usually closed with dissolvable stitches. You will not see them on the skin. Instead you will see Steri-Strips covered by a clear plastic (Tegaderm) dressing. This is a waterproof dressing that you can leave on until the incision is healed, usually 1-2 weeks. There will sometimes be dried blood on the Steri-Strips. This is from minor skin edge bleeding and is normal. It will not affect the healing of the incision.

If you have a large lipoma (greater than or equal to 3 inches) you may develop a fluid collection in the space where the lipoma once was. If this happens, nothing needs to be done (usually). It will reabsorb on its own.

### **What follow up care will I receive?**

You may not need a follow-up appointment after your operation because there are no stitches to remove. If you have questions and feel you would like to have a follow-up visit, you can call the General Surgery call center at (734) 936-5738.

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