Acrochordons

(Skin Tags, Fibroepithelial Polyps)

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En Español (Spanish Version)

Definition

Acrochordons are harmless skin growths that appear to hang off the skin. Acrochordons can be mistaken for a more serious condition, so if you think you have one, see your healthcare provider.

Causes

Acrochordons consist of collagen fibers and blood vessels that are surrounded by a thin layer of skin. It is not clear what causes them.

Risk Factors
A risk factor is something that increases your chance of getting a disease or condition. The following factors increase your chance of developing acrochordons. If you have any of these risk factors, tell your doctor:

- Skin chafing and irritation
- Pregnancy
- Acromegaly (gigantism)
- Insulin resistance
- Human papilloma virus
- Obesity
- Type 2 diabetes
- Crohn's disease

**Symptoms**

Acrochordons are usually flesh-colored, but may be darker in color. They are generally small, but can range in size from 1 millimeter to 5 centimeters in diameter. They are often found in folds of the skin.

**Diagnosis**

Your doctor will ask about your symptoms and medical history, and perform a physical exam. Most acrochordons can be diagnosed without invasive tests. In some cases, a skin biopsy may be necessary.

**Treatment**

Talk with your doctor about the best treatment plan for you. Acrochordons need to be differentiated from neurofibromas, as well as other benign skin lesions. Treatment options include the following:

**Cryotherapy**

Cryotherapy involves freezing the acrochordon so it falls off.

**Surgical Excision**

Acrochordons can be removed surgically with scissors.

**Electrosurgery**

In electrosurgery, an electric current is applied to the acrochordon to cut it off.

**Ligation**

With ligation, a suture is tied around the neck of the acrochordon to remove it.

**Prevention**

Since their cause is unclear, there is no known way to prevent acrochordons.

**RESOURCES:**
American Academy of Dermatology
http://www.aad.org

American Society for Dermatologic Surgery
http://www.asds-net.org

CANADIAN RESOURCES:

Canadian Dermatology Association
http://www.dermatology.ca/english

Dermatologists.ca
http://www.dermatologists.ca/index.html

REFERENCES:


