
REFERRAL FOR LIPOMA REMOVAL TO A SPECIALIST SURGEON

Referrals for lipoma removal are not usually indicated unless there is concern it may be a sarcoma and in particular if the size is more than 5 cm or if there is pain. If unsure, you can conduct an ultrasound.

A. EMERGENCY REFERRAL TO A SPECIALIST

- When the size is more than 5 cm.
- When it is deep (beneath or fixed to superficial fascia) (i.e. less obvious when muscle is contracted).
- When it is painful.
- When there is recurrence of a previously excised benign tumour.
- When it exhibits malignant behaviour (rapid growth or invasion into nerve or bone). When it is located in the extremities, retroperitoneally, in the groin, in the scrotum or in the abdominal wall.

If any of the above, organise an emergency ultrasound or if not possible or more than one feature present refer urgently the patient to a specialist to exclude sarcoma.

B. ROUTINE REFERRAL TO A SPECIALIST

- Multiple lipomas (suspected Dercums disease).
- Lipoma which causes distressing disfigurement.
- Lipomas that cause pressure like symptoms.

Source:

1. https://rms.kernowccg.nhs.uk/primary_care_clinical_referral_criteria/primary_care_clinical_referral_criteria/general_surgery/lipoma
2. Suspected cancer: recognition and referral; NICE guideline (2015 - last updated December 2021)
3. Costea R, Vasiliu E, Zarnescu NO, et al; Large thigh liposarcoma--diagnostic and therapeutic features. J Med Life. 2011 May 154(2):184-8. Epub 2011 May 25