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## Lipoma

### Overview

A lipoma is a slow-growing, fatty lump that's most often situated between your skin and the underlying muscle layer. A lipoma, which feels doughy and usually isn't tender, moves readily with slight finger pressure. Lipomas are usually detected in middle age. Some people have more than one lipoma.

A lipoma isn't cancer and usually is harmless. Treatment generally isn't necessary, but if the lipoma bothers you, is painful or is growing, you may want to have it removed.

### Symptoms

Lipomas can occur anywhere in the body. They are typically:

- **Situated just under the skin.** They commonly occur in the neck, shoulders, back, abdomen, arms and thighs.
- **Soft and doughy to the touch.** They also move easily with slight finger pressure.
- **Generally small.** Lipomas are typically less than 2 inches (5 centimeters) in diameter, but they can grow.
- **Sometimes painful.** Lipomas can be painful if they grow and press on nearby nerves or if they contain many blood vessels.

### When to see a doctor

A lipoma is rarely a serious medical condition. But if you notice a lump or swelling anywhere on your body, have it checked by your doctor.

### Causes

The cause of lipomas isn't fully understood. They tend to run in families, so genetic factors likely play a role in their development.

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## Risk factors

Several factors may increase your risk of developing a lipoma, including:

- **Being between 40 and 60 years old.** Although lipomas can occur at any age, they're most common in this age group.
- **Genetics.** Lipomas tend to run in families.

By [Mayo Clinic Staff](#)

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