

Lumps and Bumps

Patient Information Mr James Francombe, Consultant Surgeon.

Definition

Lumps and bumps refer to small and medium sized lumps which appear either under or within the skin anywhere on the body. There are many reasons why the lump should be removed. Most often it is purely cosmetic (ie the lump is unsightly). Sometimes the lump is painful. Sometimes there is doubt as to what the lump actually is. Do not worry! Nearly all the lumps that I remove are not dangerous. However as a matter of course all lumps removed are sent to a pathologist for diagnostic examination.

Admission

Nearly all of these operations today are performed as day cases where you are discharged home on the same day as the operation.

Anaesthetic

Nearly all 'lumps and bumps' are removed under local anaesthetic where drugs to numb the affected area are injected prior to the operation. These injections may sting a little to start but this quickly wears off. Very occasionally I will suggest a general anaesthetic. If you require a general anaesthetic and your operation is in the morning you should fast from midnight and if it is in the afternoon usually a light breakfast at 8am is permitted. If your operation is planned to be under local anaesthetic then you can eat and drink as normal before the operation. You need to check whether you are having a general or local anaesthetic prior to the surgery.

The operation

I will make an incision in the skin and remove the lump. Sometimes it is necessary to remove a piece of skin with the lump. This rarely has an impact on the final look of the scar that results. I will close the wound with sutures (stitches). Sometimes these sutures will dissolve without the need for removal and sometimes the sutures will need removing by your family doctor's practice nurse, typically 5 to 7 days after surgery. Sutures on the face should be removed earlier at about 3 days after the operation. There will always be a scar where the incision was made. The size and appearance of which will depend on the size of the lump and where the incision is situated.

After the operation

After the operation you can have something to eat and drink. After a short while a nurse will run through a checklist to ensure you are fine to go home. A responsible adult will have to remain with you for 24 hours after the procedure if you had a general anaesthetic, as it takes this time to fully recover from the anaesthetic. You may experience some pain over the operation site, but you will have been given pain killers.

Problems that can occur after the operation (post-operative complications)

The complications that can occur after such surgery are:-

1. Bleeding

Sometimes the wound can continue to bleed after the operation but usually continuous light pressure for 30 minutes will stop this. If it does not then you should return to the Warwickshire Nuffield Hospital.

2. Infection

You may notice the wound becoming progressively more painful, red or swollen. Occasionally you may notice a discharge. It is important that you see your family doctor who will prescribe appropriate antibiotics. This is usually all that is needed. Very occasionally the stitches need to be removed early in such cases. In this instance the wound may take a little longer to heal and the resultant scar maybe a little more noticeable.

3. Recurrence

Depending on the nature of the lump that was removed there is a very small chance it may come back. Even so this rarely means that it is anything to worry about.

After discharge

Any pain will subside fairly rapidly and you should be able to get back to normal activities pretty much straight away. The nurses will give you advice on how to look after the wound initially.

Follow up

You will be seen in outpatients for follow up approximately 6 weeks following surgery.