



# ANETODERMA

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The skin is made up of three layers, which consists of an outermost layer or epidermis, a middle layer known as the dermis and a bottom layer called the subcutaneous fat. Each layer has specific functions and contributes in some way to the overall strength and integrity of the skin. Anetoderma is a benign or harmless skin condition, in which the dermis loses its normal architecture. As a result, the affected skin takes on a difference appearance, often resulting in depressions in the skin or out punching in the area of concern. Often the patient will notice a depression in the skin with an overlying area of loose skin.

Anetoderma is classified by dermatologists as being primary or secondary. Primary anetoderma is an idiopathic condition (meaning that we are not certain what factor(s) caused the skin to take on this type of appearance), while secondary anetoderma can be caused by certain infections, inflammatory conditions, tumors and other disease processes in the area of the skin lesions. However, both types of anetoderma can be caused by certain systemic diseases, which can include various autoimmune diseases and infections. Currently we do not know why the lesions of anetoderma form, but the cause may be related to a defect in certain enzymes or other molecules that normally function to maintain the strength and integrity of the dermis.

The skin lesions in anetoderma are typically 1-2 centimeters, round, skin colored and are distributed in a close knit grouped pattern. The lesions will often take on either a depressed or raised appearance, although some lesions can remain level with the skin. They can appear anywhere on the body, but frequently affect the chest, back, neck and arms.

A dermatologist can readily recognize the lesions of anetoderma, though if there is doubt a skin **biopsy** can be performed to confirm the diagnosis. Once confirmed, he or she may order additional tests to rule out potential causes of the skin lesions depending on each patient's individual presentation, history and symptoms.

Unfortunately, once the lesions of anetoderma have formed, there is no treatment to get rid of the lesions. If the disease involves a small area, surgical excision of the lesions may be an option. However if a secondary problem exists that is a potential cause of the lesions, treatment of the underlying medical condition can decrease or even prevent new areas from appearing.

**This information has been provided to you compliments of the American Osteopathic College of Dermatology and your physician.**

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