



XANTHELASMA

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Xanthelasma (also known as xanthelasma palpebra) is a well-circumscribed flat or slightly elevated yellowish growth that typically occurs on or around the eyelids. It is made up of cholesterol deposits that accumulate underneath the skin and is usually an obvious clinical diagnosis. The lesions are not harmful and generally are not painful or itchy. About half of patients with xanthelasma have elevated lipid levels that are commonly associated with hereditary forms of high cholesterol or certain liver diseases. The other half of patients have normal cholesterol levels. Xanthelasma are more commonly associated with patients of Asian or Mediterranean descent. Some small studies suggest that xanthelasma may be a risk factor for death from coronary heart disease, even if cholesterol levels are normal. However, more studies are needed to confirm this.

Xanthelasma is the most common subtype of xanthoma. Xanthoma refers to the deposition of cholesterol in various areas of the body. Xanthelasmata usually do not regress on their own and either stay the same size or grow larger. This typically remains true even if elevated lipid levels are managed or treated. Treatment of these lesions is usually for cosmetics purposes as sometimes they may be disfiguring or uncomfortable. They may even come together to form larger plaques. Methods of removal include **chemical peels**, surgery, **lasers**, or **cryotherapy**. However, recurrence is common especially in those patients with hereditary forms of high cholesterol.

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