



Atypical Fibroxanthoma (AFX)

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What is this booklet about?

This booklet is designed to give you information about atypical fibroxanthoma and how it may be treated. We hope it will answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your doctor but helps you to understand more about what is discussed. If you have further questions please contact your Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS).

You should have been given the details of your CNS but if you have not, please ask your doctor's secretary to provide them.

What is atypical fibroxanthoma (AFX)?

AFX is a tumour that usually occurs in older people on the skin of the head and neck that has been damaged significantly by sun exposure and/or radiotherapy. However, AFX may occur on the trunk, extremities and in sun-protected areas of the body. It may also occur on skin where other skin cancers have been found and treated. AFX occurs equally in men and women.

What does AFX look like?

AFXs appear as raised red lesions. They are mostly dome shaped and may be ulcerated. Lesions grow rapidly, over just a few weeks or months.

If you have been diagnosed at your local hospital, you will be sent to a specialist centre that has knowledge and expertise in treating and managing AFXs. Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham is one such specialist centre.

How is it diagnosed?

This is made by clinical examination and biopsy. Because AFX can look like other skin cancers, tissue sample from the lesion will be sent to the laboratory for examination under microscope, this procedure is called a biopsy.

What is the treatment?

AFX is treated surgically by removing the tumour. A technique called Moh's micrographic surgery may be used to remove tumour tissue surgically layer by layer. As each layer is removed it is examined under a microscope until all cancerous tissue has been removed. You will be given a separate leaflet explaining more about this type of surgery.

Your doctor will discuss any alternative treatment options with you.

What happens after surgery?

You will be asked to attend follow-up appointments within Dermatology every six months for three years after your surgery, however it is important to know that most people treated with Moh's surgery will have no further problems.

The role of your CNS

Your CNS (sometimes called key worker) is an experienced skin oncology nurse who works with the other members of the team to provide specialist medical and psychological care to people with AFX and their families.

The role of your CNS is to co-ordinate any investigation, treatment and follow up care during your cancer journey. She/he is there to clarify any information, discuss matters that are important to you, provide emotional support and refer to other professionals if required. It is very important that you are able to have your questions answered and concerns discussed, your CNS will make every effort to ensure this.

You will be given a contact telephone number for the CNS so that you are able to contact her/him should you have any worries or need further information when at home.

It may help to write down questions as you think of them so that you have them ready. It may also help to bring someone with you when you attend your outpatient appointments.

Local sources of further information:

You can visit any of the health/cancer information centres listed below:

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust:

1. The Patrick Room, Cancer Centre, Heritage Building, Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, B15 2TH
Tel: 0121 371 3539 / 3537

2. Health Information Centre
Birmingham Heartlands Hospital
Bordesley Green
Birmingham, B9 5SS
Tel: 0121 424 2280

3. Patient Information Centre
Good Hope Hospital, Rectory Road
Sutton Coldfield, B75 7RR
Tel: 0121 424 9946

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust

The Courtyard Centre, Sandwell General Hospital (Main Reception)
Lyndon, West Bromwich, B71 4HJ
Tel: 0121 507 3792

Walsall PACT (Patient Advisory Cancer Team)
Tel: 0800 783 9050

About this information

This guide is provided for general information only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Every effort is taken to ensure that this information is accurate and consistent with current knowledge and practice at the time of publication. We are constantly striving to improve the quality of our information. If you have a suggestion about how this information can be improved, please contact us via our website.

Dermatology
Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2GW
Telephone: 0121 627 2000
