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**Subject: Skin Tag Removal**  
**Number: 0133**

**Effective Date: 8/15/2006**

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## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE**

*This Medical Necessity Guideline outlines the factors CareAllies considers in determining medical necessity for this indication. Please note, the terms of a participant's particular benefit plan document or summary plan description (SPD) may differ significantly from the standard upon which this Medical Necessity Guideline is based. For example, a participant's benefit plan document or SPD may contain a specific exclusion related to the topic addressed. In the event of a conflict, a participant's benefit plan document or SPD always supercedes the information in this Medical Necessity Guideline. In the absence of a controlling federal or state coverage mandate, benefits are ultimately determined by the terms of the applicable benefit plan document or SPD. Coverage determinations in each specific instance require consideration of 1) the terms of the applicable group benefit plan document or SPD in effect on the date of service; 2) any applicable laws/regulations, and; 3) the specific facts of the particular situation. Medical Necessity Guidelines are not recommendations for treatment and should never be used as treatment guidelines. ©2006 Intracorp/CareAllies*

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**Skin tag removal is considered medically necessary when there is documentation from the physician that the lesion has been subject to irritation/trauma resulting in inflammation, bleeding or infection.**

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## **General Background**

Skin tags, or acrochordons, are benign, soft, fleshy tumors that typically appear in adulthood (i.e., age 60 and over). They are found in 25% of the population and more common in women. The underlying cause is unknown, but may be hereditary. These skin lesions are flesh-colored or hyperpigmented, often pedunculated (i.e., attached to the skin by a thin stalk), and usually occur on the eyelids, neck, axillae or groin.

Skin tag lesions are composed of hyperplastic epidermis covering a dermal connective tissue stalk. They often appear in multiple numbers and may vary in size from one millimeter to one centimeter in diameter. Skin tags may be associated with seborrheic keratosis, a benign hyperkeratotic lesion of the epidermis. Lesions can increase in size and number with pregnancy or weight gain. It is not unusual for skin tags to return after removal. Due to the benign nature of skin tags, they rarely require pathologic examination.

In the majority of cases, skin tags are asymptomatic, benign and require no intervention. Patients often seek treatment because of the unsightly appearance of skin tags, requesting removal solely for cosmetic purposes. In some limited cases, skin tags may be subject to repeated local trauma or irritation resulting in chronic inflammation, pain, bleeding or localized infection. In these situations intervention may be medically necessary.

Medical treatment of skin tags includes avoidance of recurrent trauma or irritation (e.g., avoiding irritating jewelry or tight-fitting clothes) and the application of topical medications such as an antibiotic ointment.

Surgical treatment of skin tags includes excision with scissors, cautery or cryotherapy with liquid nitrogen. Skin tag removal is considered cosmetic in nature and not medically necessary when performed solely to improve appearance or to treat psychological symptomatology or psychosocial complaints.

## **Summary**

Skin tags, or acrochordons, are fleshy tumors composed of hyperplastic epidermis covering a dermal connective tissue stalk. Most are asymptomatic and benign requiring no intervention. If signs of irritation, inflammation, bleeding, and/or infection are persistent, medical or surgical intervention would be indicated.

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## Coding/Billing Information

**Note:** This list of codes may not be all-inclusive.

### When medically necessary:

CPT®*	Description
11200	Removal of skin tags, multiple fibrocutaneous tags, any area; up to and including 15 lesions
11201	Removal of skin tags, multiple fibrocutaneous tags, any area; each additional ten lesions (List separately in addition to code for primary procedure)

HCPCS Codes	Description
	No specific codes

ICD-9-CM Diagnosis Codes	Description
701.9	Unspecified hypertrophic and atrophic conditions of skin

\*Current Procedural Terminology (CPT®) © 2005 American Medical Association: Chicago, IL.

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## References

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