



ECCRINE POROCARCINOMA

WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THIS LEAFLET?

This information leaflet has been produced to help you understand more about eccrine porocarcinoma. It explains what it is, how it is diagnosed, what causes it, how it is treated, and where you can find out more about it.

WHAT IS ECCRINE POROCARCINOMA?

Eccrine porocarcinoma (EPC) is a rare type of skin cancer that starts in the sweat glands. Sweat glands are present in the skin, with more found in the skin of the palms, soles, face and scalp. Due to the rarity of EPC, it can easily be mistaken for other common types of skin cancers. Unlike the more common forms of skin cancer, it is unrelated to sun exposure.

EPC is a slow-growing tumour and can affect all ages, but it is more likely to affect men and women older than 60 years. EPC can sometimes spread to other skin areas, lymph glands or internal organs and in these cases it is more serious.

WHAT CAUSES ECCRINE POROCARCINOMA?

The cause is unknown.

IS ECCRINE POROCARCINOMA HEREDITARY?

No. There is currently no evidence to suggest this.

WHAT DOES ECCRINE POROCARCINOMA LOOK AND FEEL LIKE?

EPC can appear as a skin-coloured lump on the skin. It can be moist to touch or have a shiny surface. It can also present as a warty lump.

EPC most commonly appears on the legs, but it may also occur on the body, head or neck.

EPC often does not cause symptoms; however, bleeding, itching or pain can sometimes occur.

HOW IS ECCRINE POROCARCINOMA DIAGNOSED?

EPC is a rare cancer and so can sometimes be difficult to diagnose. Diagnosis is usually made by taking a skin biopsy of the lump. A biopsy is where a small sample of tissue is taken under local anaesthetic, so that it can be examined under a microscope to find the characteristic features of the cancer cells of the EPC.

CAN ECCRINE POROCARCINOMA BE CURED?

The cure rate is 70-80%, if the eccrine porocarcinoma is diagnosed early and completely surgically removed. However, there is a 20% risk of recurrence after the cancer has been treated.

HOW CAN ECCRINE POROCARCINOMA BE TREATED?

Treatment is usually the removal of the cancer by surgery. Normally this is done using only a local anaesthetic so that just the area being operated on is numb. Some patients may be referred for **Mohs micrographic surgery** which is a highly specialised surgical method for removing skin cancer.

In the 20% - 30% of patients, where the tumour has spread to other organs in the body, other advanced treatments such as **radiotherapy** and chemotherapy may be used to treat the cancer.

SELF-CARE (WHAT CAN I DO?)



Check your skin regularly for the appearance of a pink lump with a shiny and/or moist surface, especially on your legs. See your GP if you find such a lump.

See your GP if you notice a new change in a skin patch or lesion that you have had for a long time. Examples of change include bleeding, ulceration, or if a skin lesion quickly grows bigger.

If you have had an EPC removed/treated in the past, you should check the site regularly for any signs of recurrence as it can come back at the same site.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ECCRINE POROCARCINOMA?

Weblinks to other relevant sources:

www.dermnetnz.org/lesions/eccrine-porocarcinoma.html

Jargon Buster:

www.skinhealthinfo.org.uk/support-resources/jargon-buster/

Please note that the British Association of Dermatologists (BAD) provides web links to additional resources to help people access a range of information about their treatment or skin condition. The views expressed in these external resources may not be shared by the BAD or its members. The BAD has no control of and does not endorse the content of external links.

This leaflet aims to provide accurate information about the subject and is a consensus of the views held by representatives of the British Association of Dermatologists: individual patient circumstances may differ, which might alter both the advice and course of therapy given to you by your doctor.

This leaflet has been assessed for readability by the British Association of Dermatologists' Patient Information Lay Review Panel

BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF DERMATOLOGISTS

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

PRODUCED | FEBRUARY 2013

UPDATED | MAY 2016, JANUARY 2021,
NOVEMBER 2024

NEXT REVIEW DATE | NOVEMBER 2024

