**Keloids**

**What is a keloid?**

When a wound heals, it leaves a scar. A keloid is a special type of scar: one that grows too much and can even become larger than the original wound. It is not uncommon for surgical or injury scars to become a little lumpy (hypertrophic). A keloid differs from these in several ways:

A keloid can come up after very minor skin damage, such as an acne spot, or even if there has been no obvious damage to the skin at all.   
It can spread outside the original area of skin damage.   
It may last for many years.   
  
  
**Are keloids hereditary?**

They can be - a tendency to get keloids certainly runs in some families.

**What are the symptoms of a keloid?**

Usually there are none; but some are tender, painful, itchy, or cause a burning sensation. The main problem is that their appearance may cause embarrassment. If they are very tight, they can limit movement at nearby joints.

**What does a keloid look like?**

Keloids look like exaggerated scars. They are raised above the skin around them and sometimes they are domed. They can extend beyond the limits of the skin damage that caused the scar to come up in the first place. They are shiny and hairless; usually they feel hard and rubbery; and new ones are often red or purple, becoming browner and sometimes paler as they age. Most people with keloids have only one or two. However some people have many, especially if they have come up after acne or chickenpox scars.

**How will it be diagnosed?**

Your doctor will be able to make the diagnosis of a keloid just by looking at your skin. No investigations are usually needed.

**Can a keloid be cured?**

It is unusual for a keloid to be cured after treatment. The main problem is that cutting a keloid out often leads to an even bigger one forming later in the same place.

