

History Taking.

1. Duration.

How long? A few days? A few months or years?

Hint; Recent swellings, a few days old, are usually inflammatory, such as abscess. Swellings that have been there for months are typically neoplastic.

2. Onset.

How did it start? After trauma? (maybe hematomas) After an operation? (abdominal operation, it is likely an incisional hernia) After an insect bite? (or after minor injuries may be abscesses) On its own?

3. Progression.

Is there a change in rate of growth? Has the mass started growing quickly? Is there a sudden increase in size?

Hint; A very sudden increase in size within minutes or hours suggests a bleed into a mass. A rapid increase in size indicates malignancy: sarcomas tend to grow faster than carcinomas. If a swelling is getting smaller, think of an abscess that is resolving.

4. Features.

- Pain? *throbbing & painful; Abscesses. Painless; Neoplastic.*
- Discharge? *Pus; abscess. Sebum; Sebaceous cyst.*
- Persistence? *always present or has it ever disappeared.*
- One or multiple masses.

5. Cause.

What, in the patient's opinion, has caused the lump? *Maybe an injury before the lump*

6. Similar lump.

Is there an existing similar lump, or a previous similar lump? *Maybe a previous swelling that was taken out, only to recur: this would favor a diagnosis of malignancy.*

7. Diabetes? Past cancer? Past surgery or radiation?

Hint; Infective conditions like abscesses are commoner in diabetics. Past cancer in one breast predisposes to a cancer in the other. Past surgery or trauma maybe epidermal inclusion cyst or a keloid, in the abdomen may an incisional hernia. Past radiation to neck, risk of thyroid cancers.

Physical Examination.

Local examination:

➤ **Inspection.**

1. **Number, Size** (Sebaceous cysts & most abscesses are small, < 5 cm while Cancers maybe larger), **Site** (Hernias occur only in the abdomen).
2. **Shape. Spherical, oval, pear-shaped, butterfly-shaped, or irregular?** (Groin hernias are typically "pear-shaped". Diffuse thyroid enlargements are usually oval, but may (rarely) be butterfly)
3. **Edge. well-defined or poorly-defined** (a "poorly-defined" edge means that you cannot see the edge clearly. Swellings that are deep obviously will have poorly-defined edges like abscesses)
4. **Margins. regular or irregular.** (Benign conditions, including benign neoplasms, regular margins. Cancers maybe irregular margins).
5. **Surface. smooth or irregular or lobulated or nodular.**
6. **Overlying skin.**
 - **Color;** Abscesses > reddish, Melanomas > black, Hemangiomas and hematomas > bluish
 - **Dilated veins;** means it is rapidly growing. A typical example is a sarcoma.
 - **Ulceration.**
7. **Adjacent structures.**

➤ **Palpation.**

1. **Tenderness. Painful or Painless.**
2. **Temperature.** *If raised > High vascularity > inflammation*
3. **Consistency. soft, spongy, rubbery, firm, or hard** (cancers > hard, benign tumors > firm, cysts > soft. Metastatic lymph nodes from a carcinoma > hard, while in a lymphoma the lymph nodes > rubbery)
4. **Surface. smooth or irregular or lobulated or nodular.**
5. **Mobility/ fixity.** *Benign masses > mobile. Malignant masses that invade tissues > restricted or lack of mobility.*
6. **Reducibility. Reducible or Irreducible. (can be pushed back or not) e.g. Hernia**
7. **Compressibility.** *Compressible > reappear immediately after compression is removed.*
8. **Pulsation.**
9. **Fluctuation. (two apart feeling fingers & a displacing finger) (+ve in fluid filled mass)**
10. **Transillumination. (Using light > clear fluid) (+ve in hydroceles & cystic hygromas)**
11. **Regional lymph nodes.** *must ALWAYS be examined.*
 - **Percussion.** *important in abdominal masses.*
 - **Auscultation.** *Listen for a bruit, occurs in vascular masses like aneurysms.*

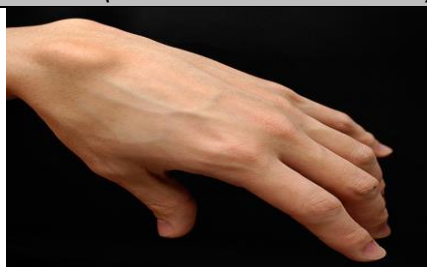
Cases (similar to doctor's slides)



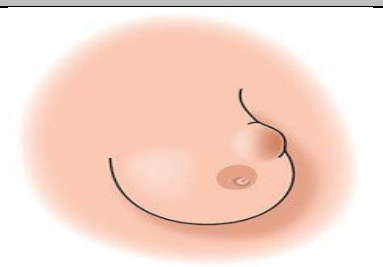
Hemangioma



Lipoma



Ganglion cyst



Breast lump



Skin face Melanoma

DDx: 1. Benign or malignant. 2. Mobile (with skin/independent of skin) or immppbile. 3. Level of mass (skin, subcutaneous tissue, vessels, nerves, muscles, bones).

Hints: immppbile > reach muscle, noraml skin > skin not involved. [skin > Basal cell CA, squamous cell CA or melanoma] [SC tissue > Lipoma, liposarcoma] [BV > Hematoma, Hemangioma] [Muscle > rhabdomyosarcoma]

