

ADVICE

YOUR HEALTH

WHAT ARE CHERRY ANGIOMAS?

HAVE you ever spotted small, reddish moles on your skin and felt a twinge of concern? You're not alone – and worry is a natural response when something new appears on your body. But worry not: those little red moles are called cherry angiomas, and they're completely harmless. They're simply skin lesions or moles made up of tiny blood vessels, which typically give them a reddish appearance. Here's what you need to know.

Q WHAT CAUSES CHERRY ANGIOMAS?
A The exact cause of cherry angiomas remains unclear, says dermatologist Dr Jacques du Toit from Mediclinic Louis Leipoldt in Bellville, Cape Town, but ageing is widely regarded as the primary factor, with genetics also playing a role.

Q AT WHAT AGE DO THEY TYPICALLY START DEVELOPING?
A They most commonly occur in older adults but sometimes do appear in people in their 20s or earlier. "They occasionally develop during adolescence, but most appear in midlife and may increase in number and size as you grow older," says Professor Mahlatse Kgokolo, head of the department of dermatology at the University of Pretoria.

Q WHY ARE THEY RED OR PURPLE IN COLOUR?
A The colour comes from blood inside the densely packed capillaries – the delicate blood vessels that deliver nutrients and oxygen to cells



throughout your body, Du Toit explains. Kgokolo adds that early lesions are bright red, while older ones tend to appear purple.

Q CAN CHERRY ANGIOMAS BECOME CANCEROUS?
A These lesions are benign, which means they are not cancerous. "However, if a lesion changes in

appearance, bleeds without injury, becomes irregular or pigmented, or looks significantly different from other spots on your body, it should be assessed by a dermatologist," Du Toit says. Kgokolo says so-called eruptive cherry angiomas,

FAST FACT
An estimated 50% of adults have cherry angiomas after age 30. They typically appear on the trunk, arms and legs, and are 1–5mm in diameter.

although rare, have been associated with internal malignancy, meaning an abnormal and uncontrolled growth of cells in the body's internal organs, tissues or glands. This is why confirming the diagnosis matters if you are

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concerned as some skin conditions, including skin cancers, can be mistaken for cherry angiomas.

Q IS TREATMENT NECESSARY?
A "Treatment is not medically necessary but may be desired for cosmetic reasons," Kgokolo says. "This is particularly when lesions are on visible areas like the face, chest or arms," Du Toit adds. "Occasionally treatment may be considered if a cherry angioma is in an area prone to repeated friction from clothing, shaving or jewellery."
Available treatments include:
▶ Shave excision – a surgical blade is used to shave the growth to skin level; this is done under local anaesthesia.
▶ Electrocautery – controlled heat is used to destroy the lesion.
▶ Cryotherapy – extreme cold is used to freeze and destroy the lesion.
▶ Laser – a focused beam of light targets the blood vessels feeding the angioma without harming the surrounding skin; this is one of the most precise options, especially for multiple lesions.

Q DO THEY GROW BACK AFTER REMOVAL?
A As cherry angiomas are linked to age and genetics, new ones may keep appearing over time. But a removed lesion won't grow back in the same spot. "Removal treats the individual lesion, but it does not stop the body from forming new ones in the future," Du Toit says.

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

NOT YOUR USUAL CLUTTER



How much of the stuff in your home is aspirational clutter? Yes, that's an actual thing – it's the term for those items you keep because they remind you of who you'd like to be. Like the exercise bike gathering dust in your garage or the sparkling wine glasses you bought for that fancy brunch you wanted to have but never organised. According to Ann Lightfoot, author of *Love Your Home Again*, aspirational clutter takes up not only physical space but also emotional space, because it makes you feel that you "should" be more or do more. But there's value in letting

these things go, she says, because once you do, the voice that says you're not enough also disappears. How do you start? Make a list of the things you're keeping for a "future you" – clothes that no longer fit, books you're not actually going to read, hobby or sports equipment that just sits there. Write down how each item makes you feel and how it affects your self-image. If the feeling is negative, try reframing it positively, for example, "Letting go of these clothes means I accept my body as it is now". Be realistic about what you will actually use. If you still want to read that book you bought in 2018, commit to giving yourself 20 minutes a day to read it. If you can't

ASPIRATIONAL CLUTTER CARRIES QUIET PRESSURE THAT SAYS 'I SHOULD BE DOING MORE'

make time for it, it doesn't deserve a place in your home. The biggest step is probably going to be accepting that you're saying goodbye to a version of yourself, says Emily McDermott, host of the podcast *Moms Overcoming Overwhelm*. It can be hard, but it makes room for who you are now and what you really need.



YOUR PET

DOGS GET THE SNEEZES TOO

A dog sneezing isn't unusual, but you may notice that your pet sneezes more often when they play or get excited. Playful sneezing is completely normal and nothing to worry about – it's just their way of showing they're enjoying themselves. It's especially common in smaller dog breeds, but many dogs do it. It's also a way for dogs to signal to each other that they're playing and not fighting or being aggressive. This playful sneeze is usually accompanied by a relaxed body and a tail wagging back and forth.

SOURCES: SIMPLYEMMY.COM, WASHINGTONPOST.COM, CAPTURINGCHARMEDLIFE.COM, BHG.COM, MARLEYBONES.COM, PURINA.CO.UK, BBC.COM, THEGUARDIAN.COM, ENWIKIPEDIA.ORG