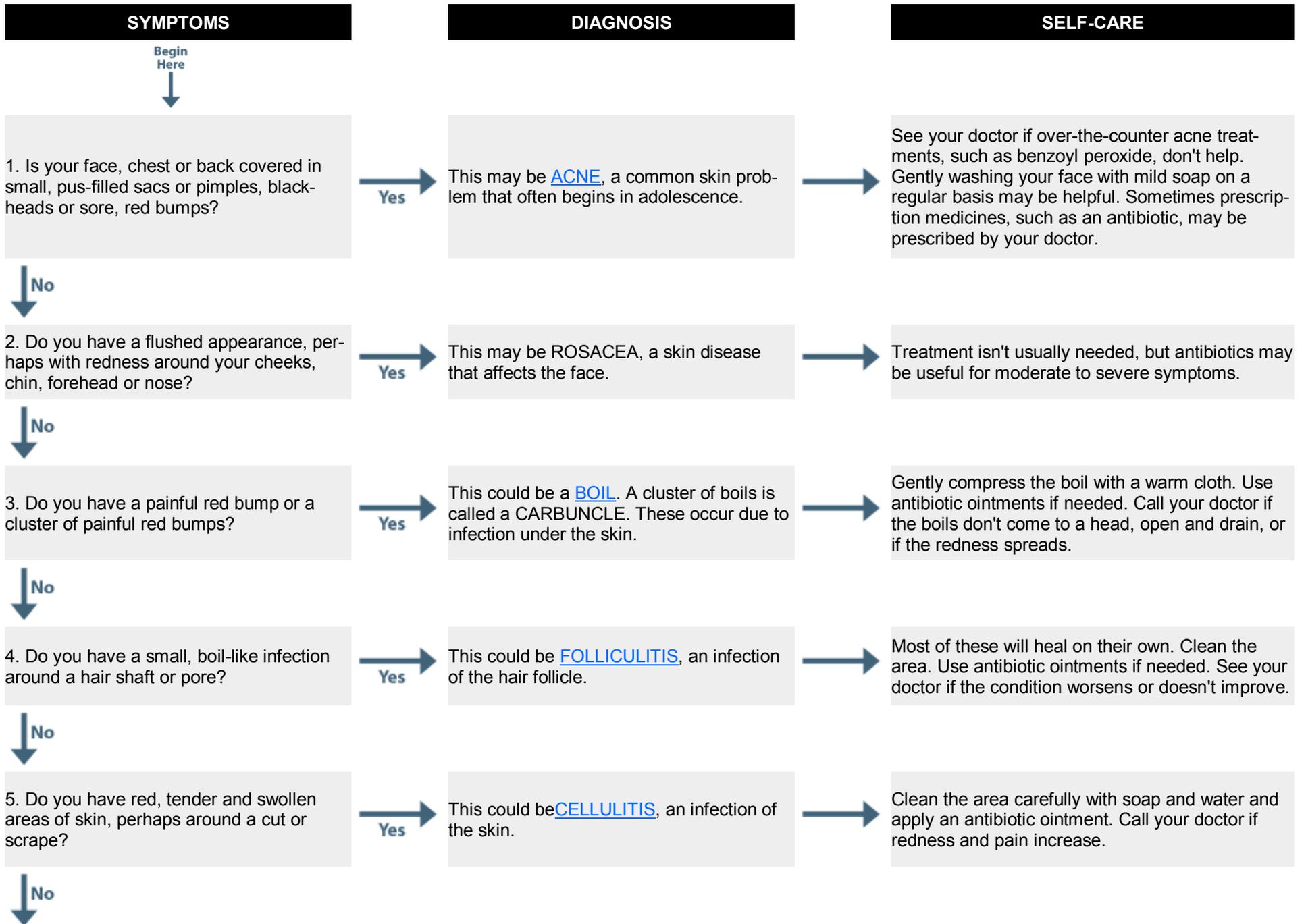


Skin Rashes and Other Changes

The location, appearance and color of a rash will help your doctor make a diagnosis. Look for care suggestions on this chart for common rashes and other skin conditions.



6. Do you have red, itchy bumps on your skin, and are they sprinkled randomly?

Yes

These could be [INSECT BITES](#).

These aren't usually harmful. Use hydrocortisone cream, antihistamine and ice to relieve itching. If symptoms get worse or don't clear up, call your doctor. If new symptoms arise, such as difficulty breathing, dizziness or nausea, go to the emergency room right away.

No

7. Do you have irregular, raised or flat red sores that appeared after taking medicine?

Yes

This could be an [ALLERGIC REACTION](#) to the medicine.

Call your doctor. Try an antihistamine for itching and rash.

No

8. Have bumps formed suddenly on your face or body?

Yes

These could be [HIVES](#), a skin reaction to an allergen, medicine or infection. They can also appear in some people who are very nervous.

Use an antihistamine and cool compresses for itching. If the hives don't go away on their own or are accompanied by other symptoms, such as swelling around the lips or trouble breathing, see your doctor or go to the emergency room right away.

No

9. Do you have a red, itchy, scaly and oily rash, and does it affect the areas around your eyebrows, nose or the edge of your scalp?

No

Go to Question 12.*

Yes

10. Is the person an adult?

Yes

This could be a sign of [SEBORRHEIC DERMATITIS](#), a condition in which the sebaceous glands overproduce.

Try using hydrocortisone cream or selenium sulfide shampoo on the sore areas. See your doctor if the symptoms continue or spread.

No

11. Is the person a child and does the dry, scaly skin cover the head?

Yes

This could be [CRADLE CAP](#), a form of seborrhea in infants.

Try gently scrubbing the scales to remove them. Hydrocortisone cream may also help. See your doctor if the rash doesn't go away or if the hair doesn't grow in that area.

No

*12. Do you have a red, scaling rash, and did it begin after contact with clothing, jewelry or perfume?

Yes

This could be [IRRITANT CONTACT DERMATITIS](#). It's caused by a reaction to detergents, perfumes and other substances.

Avoid whatever you think caused the symptoms and treat the area with hydrocortisone cream or other soothing lotions.

No

13. Do you have a red, itchy rash, and are blisters forming?

Yes →

This could be [ALLERGIC CONTACT DERMATITIS](#), caused by POISON IVY, poison oak or poison sumac. The oil from these plants causes an ALLERGIC REACTION.

→

Wash the area with soap and water to remove any oil that remains on the skin. The rash will go away after about a week. To relieve itching, apply hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion to the rash. See your doctor if the rash covers a large area of your body, does not go away, or if new symptoms, such as fever, appear .

↓ No

14. Are there red, swollen, tender bumps in your armpits or other areas where hair grows?

Yes →

This could be [HIDRADENITIS SUPPURATIVA](#), inflammation of the sweat glands.

→

See your doctor. Avoid using antiperspirants and deodorants.

↓ No

15. Do you have small red dots on your skin, or larger, bruise-like spots that appeared after taking medicine?

Yes →

This could be [ALLERGIC PURPURA](#), a serious allergic reaction to a medicine, such as an antibiotic that can cause bleeding.

→

See your doctor right away.

↓ No

16. Do you have a rash that started with a single scaly, red and slightly itchy spot, and within a few days, did large numbers of smaller patches of the rash, some red and others tan, break out over your chest and abdomen?

Yes →

This may be [PITYRIASIS ROSEA](#). The causes aren't known.

→

Check with your doctor. Calamine lotion and antihistamines may relieve itching and redness. The rash will probably go away in a few weeks. Pityriasis rosea doesn't usually respond to treatment.

↓ No

17. Do you have an intensely itchy rash with red bumps and blisters, and does it appear on your elbows, knees, back or buttocks?

Yes →

This may be [DERMATITIS HERPETIFORMIS](#), a rash associated with a sensitivity to gluten, a protein found in cereal grains such as barley and wheat.

→

See your doctor. Antibiotics can help control symptoms. Avoid foods that contain gluten.

↓ No

18. Do you have large, red bumps on your skin that seem to bruise, and are they tender to touch?

Yes →

This could be [ERYTHEMA NODOSUM](#), possibly caused by an infection or reaction to a medicine.

→

This condition usually isn't serious, but see your doctor to check for other diseases or causes of your symptoms.

↓ No

19. Do you have a white, scaly rash over red, irritated skin, possibly on your elbows and knees?

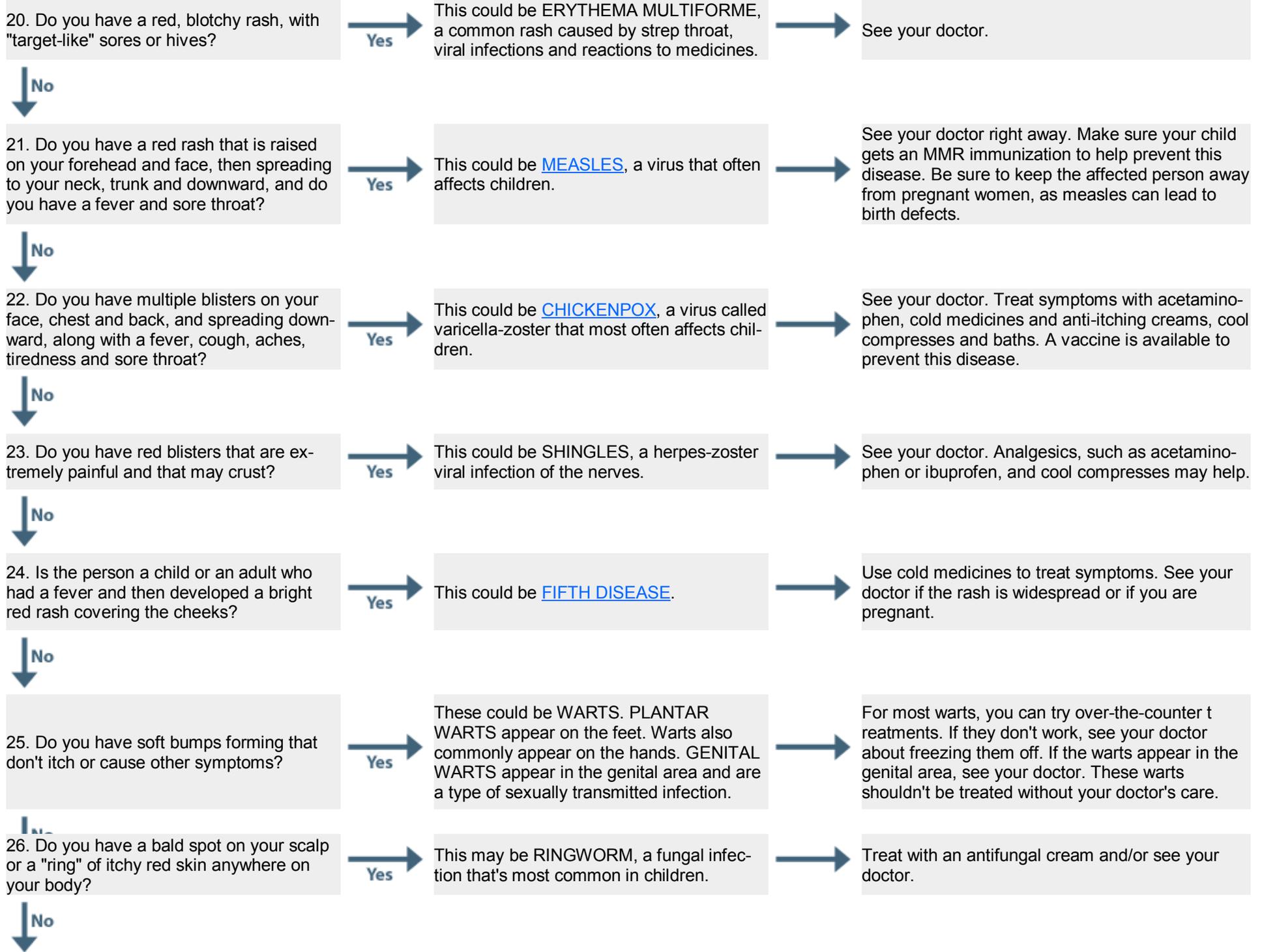
Yes →

This could be [PSORIASIS](#), a condition caused by the overproduction of skin cells.

→

See your doctor. Keep the skin moisturized. Your doctor may prescribe ointments, oral medications and/or light therapy, also called phototherapy, to treat the symptoms.

↓ No



27. Do you have a rash that is red but not itchy and does it affect the palms of your hands or soles of your feet?

↓ No

28. Do you have a red, itchy rash that affects your groin area?

↓ No

29. Is an area of your skin covered in light-colored patches?

↓ No

30. Have crusted, tan-colored sores formed near your nose or lip?

↓ No

31. Do you have bite-like sores that itch intensely, and that may have started on your hands, or between your fingers?

↓ No

32. Did a fine rash start on your arms and legs and also affect the palms of your hands and soles of your feet, and have you had a fever and headache?

↓ No

33. Do you have a "butterfly" rash on your forehead and cheeks and do you have achy joints?

↓ No

→ Yes

This may be **SYPHILIS**, a sexually transmitted infection.



See your doctor right away.

→ Yes

This could be a fungal infection called **JOCK ITCH** in men, **YEAST INFECTION** in women, or **DIAPER RASH** in infants.



Try an over-the-counter antifungal cream. If the rash doesn't go away, see your doctor. Women with irritation inside the vagina should first see their doctor before using over-the-counter yeast infection medicines.

→ Yes

This may be **TINEA VERSICOLOR**, a discoloration caused by a fungus.



Tinea versicolor can be treated with selenium sulfide or an antifungal cream.

→ Yes

This could be **IMPETIGO**, a rash caused by a bacterial infection, such as strep or staph.



See your doctor. Treatment usually involves an antibiotic cream or ointment and an oral antibiotic. The condition is very contagious, so wash your hands well to avoid infecting anyone else.

→ Yes

This is a sign of **SCABIES**, an infestation of mites.



Prescription medicine may be needed, along with washing clothing and bed coverings in hot water and detergent.

→ Yes

This could be **ROCKY MOUNTAIN SPOTTED FEVER**, a disease spread by ticks.



See your doctor right away.

→ Yes

This could be a symptom of **LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS**, a severe, arthritis-like disease.



See your doctor right away.

34. Is your skin tinged yellow, and are the whites of your eyes and your mouth yellow?

↓ No

→ Yes

This could be [JAUNDICE](#). It's common in newborns but can be a sign of HEPATITIS, a disease of the liver.

→

See your doctor right away.

35. Do you have a blue or black area on your skin, and did the discoloration occur after the area had been hit?

↓ No

→ Yes

This is probably a BRUISE.

→

No treatment is usually necessary. Ice may slow the bleeding and swelling under the skin.

36. Are there scaly, pink, gray or tan patches or bumps on your face, scalp or on the backs or your hands?

↓ No

→ Yes

This could be ACTINIC KERATOSES, a skin condition that can especially affect people with light skin who have been over-exposed to the sun.

→

See your doctor. Actinic keratoses may lead to skin cancer.

37. Do you have a scar that has grown larger than expected?

↓ No

→ Yes

This may be a KELOID, an overgrown scar or HYPERTROPHIC SCAR.

→

These are benign (non-cancerous) and may fade in time. See your doctor if you want the keloid removed, but surgery may cause more scar tissue to form. Keloids may be prevented by using a pressure dressing.

38. Do you have a soft or rubbery growth?

↓ No

→ Yes

This may be a LIPOMA, a growth made up of fat cells.

→

These aren't cancerous, but have them checked by your doctor. You can have a lipoma removed if

39. Is the person a newborn and is the baby's face covered in small, white bumps?

↓ No

→ Yes

This may be MILIA, or baby acne.

→

This condition usually clears up after the first few weeks of life and doesn't require treatment.

40. Do you have small, firm, round bumps with pits in the center that may sit on tiny stalks?

↓ No

→ Yes

This may be MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM, bumps caused by a virus.

→

See your doctor. These bumps are contagious and most common in children and teens. Early treatment helps prevent the spread.

41. Do you have a bump with a white dome under your skin, perhaps on your scalp, nape of your neck or upper back?

Yes

This may be a SEBACEOUS CYST, or blocked oil gland.

→

These cysts aren't cancerous, but have them checked by your doctor to make sure of the diagnosis. Large cysts can be removed with surgery.

No

42. Do you have a soft, fleshy growth, lump or bump, perhaps on your face, neck, armpits or groin?

Yes

This may be a SKIN TAG.

→

These are harmless, but if one gets irritated, you can have it removed.

No

43. Do you have a yellow area under your skin, perhaps near your eyelids?

Yes

This may be an XANTHELASMA, a fatty deposit.

→

If it bothers you, see your doctor about having it removed.

No

44. Is there a dark bump that may have started within a mole or blemish, or, is there a spot or mole anywhere on your skin that has changed in color, size, shape or is painful or itchy?

Yes

This could be a MELANOMA, a type of skin cancer.

→

See your doctor right away.

No

45. Is there a fleshy, growing mass on or near your nose, eyes or other areas that have been exposed to the sun, such as your back or chest?

Yes

This could be BASAL CELL CARCINOMA, the most common type of skin cancer.

→

Have this checked by your doctor. This type of cancer is easily treated if caught early.

No

46. Is there an unusual growth on your face, lip or chin that is red, scaly or crusted?

Yes

This could be SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA, a type of skin cancer.

→

See your doctor right away.

No

47. Are there dark or black raised spots anywhere on your skin that keep growing or have appeared recently?

Yes

This could be KAPOSI'S SARCOMA, a serious type of skin cancer most common in people who have AIDS or other immune deficiencies.

→

See your doctor right away.

No

For more information, please talk to your doctor. If you think the problem is serious, call your doctor right away.

This tool has been reviewed by doctors and is for general educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for medical advice. The information in this tool should not be relied upon to make decisions about your health. Always consult your family doctor with questions about your individual condition(s) and/or circumstances. Source: American Academy of Family Physicians. Family Health & Medical Guide. Dallas: Word Publishing; 1996.