

What are keloids?

Keloids are scars that can grow to become very thick. Keloids can become much bigger than the original cut or injury that caused the scar. They can itch and feel harder than regular scars. Keloids can be pink, red, dark brown, or match your own skin color.

ARE KELOIDS DANGEROUS?

Keloids can be uncomfortable, but they are not dangerous.

WHAT CAUSES KELOIDS?

We do not know exactly why some people and some parts of the body develop keloids and others do not. There are some things we do know that makes keloids more likely:

- » **Genes:** Keloids often run in families, so differences in our genes can make them more likely to form.
- » **Ancestry:** People with darker skin tones are more likely to have keloids. Keloids are most common in people of Black African, Afro-Caribbean, or Asian backgrounds.
- » **Location:** Keloids tend to show up more in certain areas, like the chest, shoulders, earlobes, or upper back.
- » **Injury:** Keloids can happen after any kind of skin injury, even if it's just irritation, infection, or a piercing.

HOW ARE KELOIDS DIAGNOSED?

A healthcare provider, such as a dermatologist, can tell if you have a keloid based on how a scar looks, feels, and changes over time.

TREATMENT & PREVENTION OF KELOIDS

CAN YOU REMOVE OR SHRINK KELOIDS?

Treatments depend on the size, location, and how fast a keloid is growing. Options can include:

- » **No treatment.** Keloids may not need treatment if they are small and not causing problems.
- » **Creams, gels, or ointments** can help with itch and redness.
- » **Silicone pressure bandages** or pressure earrings can help flatten a keloid or stop it from growing more. Pressure treatments must be worn for most of the day, usually for at least 4 to 6 months.

TREATMENT & PREVENTION (CONT.)

- » **Scar massage** can help make scars and keloids less thick. Usually this involves rubbing the scar for 5-10 minutes twice daily. Increase pressure to the scar as tolerated, massaging in different directions to break up the scar tissue.
- » **Steroid shots** can make keloids smaller and less itchy. Typically, several shots are given over several months. The shots can be painful.
- » **Cryotherapy** (freezing) can also make keloids smaller, but can be painful.
- » **Surgery** (removing the keloid) is sometimes used, followed by pressure or other treatment. Keloids often grow back quickly after cutting them off, so surgery is usually combined with other treatments to prevent regrowth.
- » **Lasers** can be used to make keloids less red and thick. Usually, multiple laser sessions are needed.

CAN I PREVENT KELOIDS?

- » If you get a cut, scrape, or burn, make sure to clean it gently. Get medical help if needed. Keep the wound moist with petroleum jelly or a special bandage. After the wound has healed, using a silicone gel sheet can sometimes help prevent keloids.
- » If you're thinking about getting a piercing or tattoo, consider the risk of keloids forming. Keloids can sometimes develop around piercings or tattoos.
- » If you notice a scar is growing fast or getting elevated, you can start some treatments. Treatments that might help prevent keloids include scar massage and pressure dressings. If you are concerned, have the scar checked by your doctor.
- » Sunlight doesn't cause keloids, but it can darken their color. Cover scars with sunscreen, clothing, or a hat.



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The Society for Pediatric Dermatology and Wiley Publishing cannot be held responsible for any errors or for any consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this handout. Handout originally published in *Pediatric Dermatology*; Vol. 41, No. 1 (2024).

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