



◆ Dr. P.A. Spear ◆ Dr. K. Marcovitch ◆ Dr. G.M. Somerville ◆ Dr. N. Tucker
◆ Dr. Moiseiykina ◆ Dr. W. Hatch ◆ Dr. A. Macdonald ◆ Dr. A. Yu

2200 Yonge Street, Suite 600, Toronto, ON M4S 2C6 Ph: (416) 486-6084 F: (416) 638-7379 www.torontoeyeclinic.com

Xanthelasma

Yellowish lesions that appear around the eyelids are called *xanthelasmata* (more than one xanthelasma). They are deposits of macrophages (a type of white blood cell) that have taken up cholesterol and accumulated together. These macrophages are similar to the ones that deposit in the blood vessels and cause build-up of plaques and hardening in the arteries (atherosclerosis).

Therefore you are advised to see your family doctor for blood tests to check your cholesterol levels. If they are found to be high, you may also need to be checked for certain medical conditions that cause high cholesterol, such as poor liver function or diabetes.

In 50% of people with xanthelasmata, blood test results for cholesterol will be normal. However the risk of heart disease remains. Studies have found that people with xanthelasmata have:

- 51% higher risk of having a heart attack
- 40% higher risk of developing ischemic heart disease
- 17% higher risk of death

Cholesterol deposits in the skin are an indicator of underlying atherosclerotic disease, regardless of the cholesterol levels found with blood testing

Xanthelasmata can be removed surgically but the associated underlying condition may need to be treated.