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## **BENIGN SKIN CONDITIONS**

Why should you biopsy a pigmented lesion?

Any pigmented lesion that exhibits one or all the warning signs should be investigated:

### **WARNING SIGNS**

Change in color	Irregular Border
Pain, irritation, pruritis (itching)	Irregular distribution of pigment
Infection	Onset after age 40
Bleeding ulceration, crusting	Change in size

### **Intradermal / Compound / Junctional Nevus**

Nevus is the medical term given to moles. Moles can come in a variety of shapes, colors and sizes. Junctional Nevi, or moles are flat since they have few cells in their structure. They often are a dark shade of brown. Compound Nevi generally are lighter shades of brown and tend to be a bit raised up off the skin. These nevi might also have both raised and flat component to them. Intradermal tend to be flesh colored and are elevated giving them a dome shape. Although these nevi are benign, it is often hard to tell these moles apart from atypical moles because of their dark color and irregular shape making a biopsy necessary for confirmation. There is a small chance that once removed, these moles can come back. If this happens you do not have to worry because these moles are benign.

### **Blue Nevus**

Blue nevi are benign moles that often appear at birth but they can also arise later in life. Common locations for these moles are on the head, neck, forearm, and dorsum of the hand. These moles are a dark blue to black in color. Because of the dark appearance of these mole, a biopsy is often warranted to rule out any dangerous types of skin cancers.

### **Lentigos**

Lentigos are non-cancerous lesions also known as "age spots". They are usually flat and brown-black in color. They have nothing to do with the liver. Lentigos usually appear on the face, hands, back and feet and are promoted by genetics and chronic sun exposure in more mature skin. Often times, lentigos can be very dark in color making them hard to distinguish between skin cancers making a biopsy necessary for confirmation.

### **Sebaceous hyperplasia**

Sebaceous hyperplasias are benign enlarge oil glands. Some people have a genetic predisposition for these growths. They usually range in size from that of a pinhead to that of a pencil eraser. They rarely go away and usually continue to grow and multiply throughout time. They can be treated best with electrosurgery, but there is always a risk of scarring.

### **Seborrheic keratosis**

Seborrheic keratosis or age spot is a benign growth that can occur anywhere on the body. They usually appear as a greasy, stuck-on-brown, tan or black wart-like growth. If examined very closely under a magnifying glass, miniature white or light horn pearls (tiny, white beads of keratin that can fit on the tip of a pen) may be noticed within the seborrheic keratosis. These are growths that people develop over time and it is not unusual to have numerous seborrheic keratosis on the body.

### **Verrucous Acanthomas**

These lesions have a wart-like appearance, and may be smooth or flat. They can range in color from skin colored to jet black. If they have a mixture of brown and black colors, they can resemble an atypical mole or melanoma, and a biopsy may be performed. In general, if one is extremely large and thick, it is known as a verrucous acanthoma. Lesions may be removed for cosmetic reasons or if they are associated with intense itching, irritation, or bleeding.

### **Lichen Planus like Keratosis**

A lichen planus like keratosis is a growth caused by sun damage. Lichen planus like keratosis are difficult to see; they feel rough and are sometimes scaly. They are often due to sun you had many years ago.

### **Dermatofibroma**

A dermatofibroma is a round, brownish to purple indurated growth that is commonly found on the legs and arms, but can occur anywhere on the body. Dermatofibromas contain scar tissue and can feel like hard lumps in the skin. The cause for dermatofibromas is unknown. They are thought to be caused by insect bites that get shaved over or are re-traumatized. They are harmless and can not turn into cancerous lesions.

### **Chondrodermatitis Nodularis Helicis**

Chondrodermatitis Nodularis Helicis or CNH for short is a benign sometimes painful growth that occurs on the cartilage of the ear. The cause of CNH is due to repeated pressure on the ear from sleeping or use of a phone. Other causes are contributed to trauma or actinic damage.

CNH is often difficult to differentiate from basal or squamous cell carcinoma and therefore may need to undergo a biopsy to rule these out. However, CNH are non-cancerous lesions, treatment centers on relieving pressure from the ear.

### **Sebaceous / Epidermal / Follicular Cysts**

A sebaceous, or epidermal, cyst is a small, moveable lump under the skin. It forms when surface skin cells move deeper into the skin and multiply. These cells form the wall of the cyst and secrete a soft, yellowish substance called keratin, which fills the cyst. If the wall of the cyst is ruptured, the keratin is discharged into the surrounding skin, which causes irritation and inflammation. A cyst usually does not need to be treated unless it is infected or is causing a cosmetic problem.

### **Angioma**

Angiomas are benign that are made up of small blood vessels. They usually appear reddish in color and can be raised or flat. These lesions generally develop over time and may appear anywhere on the body. It is not uncommon to have several angiomas on the body.

**\*\* Often times, people make scars that raise or bump up. These scars are known as**

**keloids. If your scar bumps up and you do not like the way it looks, we can sometimes inject it with steroid to help flatten it out. It may take more than one treatment however.**