

## **NEVUS SEBACEOUS**

A nevus sebaceous is a medical term used to describe a fairly common benign growth in childhood. It is often present at birth but may develop in later childhood. The word nevus refers to a type of mole. The word sebaceous refers to oil glands. It is a type of mole composed of oil glands therefore it is called nevus sebaceous.

In most cases a nevus sebaceous is noticed as a slightly raised or flat yellowish area in the skin. It often occurs in the head and neck area but may be found on other areas of the body. If the growth is located in the scalp there may or may not be hair coming from the middle of it.

In many cases a nevus sebaceous is slightly raised or inflamed at birth because of the hormonal stimulation of the pregnancy. After birth the lesion usually flattens out and remains that way until puberty. The normal hormonal stimulation, which occurs during puberty, again causes the lesion to raise up. It may have a slightly bumpy texture.

Besides the oil gland component of a nevus sebaceous there are other normal skin elements present. At times a slightly raised portion may develop within a nevus sebaceous which requires treatment because it protrudes more from the skin. If there would be any changes in your growth please let me know.

It was formerly thought all nevus sebaceous type growths should be removed because there were reports of skin cancer developing within them. It is now known that true skin cancers are rare and even if a skin cancer develops it is the type that is very superficial and easily treated. In addition these types of skin cancers never develop early in life but well after puberty. Most doctors now feel that it is not necessary to remove these types of growths but just to keep an eye on them. If there are any changes in the growth these can be taken care of at that time.

Ideally it would be best to remove nevus sebaceous growths. In the real world however it is often not so easy. In many cases the lesions are large and a fairly significant scar would result. In addition it may not be possible to remove the growth because the child is too young to have the surgery. Certainly it is fine to wait until puberty to make a decision. If it is possible to remove the growth without significant scarring then this can be arranged.

Again, a nevus sebaceous is a type of benign growth, which tends to develop in childhood and may rise up slightly in puberty. After the age of twenty it normally does not change. In general these can be left alone or if possible removed surgically. If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to ask me before you leave the office.