

Nevus Sebaceous

A nevus sebaceous (NEE vuhs sih BAY shus) is a type of birthmark that usually appears on the scalp. It may also appear on the face but this is less common. It is made of extra oil glands in the skin.

It starts as a flat pink or orange plaque (slightly raised area). Hair does not grow in a nevus sebaceous. Typically, these are fairly small areas of skin. However, they can sometimes be larger and more noticeable.

These birthmarks usually look the same until puberty. Hormonal changes cause them to become more raised. During adolescence (teen years) they can become very bumpy and wart-like. This can make them bothersome when brushing, combing or cutting the hair.

A nevus sebaceous does not go away on its own. The cause is unknown.

As a person gets older, typically after adolescence, abnormal changes to the area can sometimes occur. Your child's doctor will monitor it over time.

Diagnosis

Your child's doctor can usually diagnosis this kind of birthmark. If unsure, the doctor may take a small piece of the birthmark as a biopsy. The doctor will send it to a lab to be looked at under a microscope. This can confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment

Generally, it is very safe for your child's doctor to simply watch a nevus sebaceous over time. This is especially true while your child is young (before puberty).

A nevus sebaceous will not affect your child's health, but you or your child may still want it to be taken off. If your child's nevus sebaceous is large or becomes bothersome, it may be removed. If there are abnormal changes to the area, it may also be removed. Depending on the size and location of the birthmark, your child's doctor may refer him or her to a plastic surgeon.