

Congenital nevi

Congenital nevi or birthmarks are essentially colored skin markings that develop before or shortly after birth.

Benign developmental skin lesions that develop later in life are called 'acquired' nevi.

What causes nevi?

Nevi are caused by visible clusters of cells in the skin. Vascular nevi are due to clusters of blood vessels, melanocytic nevi are due to clusters of pigmented skin cells (melanocytes), and epidermal nevi are due to clusters of keratinocyte skin cells. The exact cause of why these occur is unknown but it may relate to localized abnormalities of certain genes. There is no known way to prevent them.

What treatment is available?

Surgical treatment is sometimes a possibility for cosmetic reasons. Certainly, if there is any change or irregularity in these lesions, a dermatologist should be consulted for evaluation and possible biopsy to rule out cancer.