



When Should I See a Dermatologist?

While seborrheic keratoses aren't dangerous, it can be challenging to distinguish between a harmless growth and a dangerous one. If you're worried about a growth on your skin, make an appointment to see your dermatologist or doctor. It's always better to be safe than to miss something potentially dangerous.

You should also check with a skincare professional if you notice the following changes in your skin:

- **A new growth develops.**
- **An existing growth changes in appearance.**
- **A growth is an unusual color (reddish-black, blue, or purple).**
- **A growth has irregular borders, which may appear jagged or blurred.**
- **The growth(s) cause pain or irritation.**

How Are They Diagnosed? Do They Need to Be Treated?

Most of the time, dermatologists can diagnose a seborrheic keratosis by looking at it but may choose to remove the growth and have it biopsied.

Because these growths are harmless, they usually do not need treatment. However, a dermatologist may remove a seborrheic keratosis if it

- looks like it may be a skin cancer,
- becomes irritated,
- gets caught on clothing or jewelry easily, or
- seems unattractive to the patient.

If you have a seborrheic keratosis removed, your dermatologist will probably use a blade to shave off the growth. Other treatments may also include cryotherapy or electrocauterization.

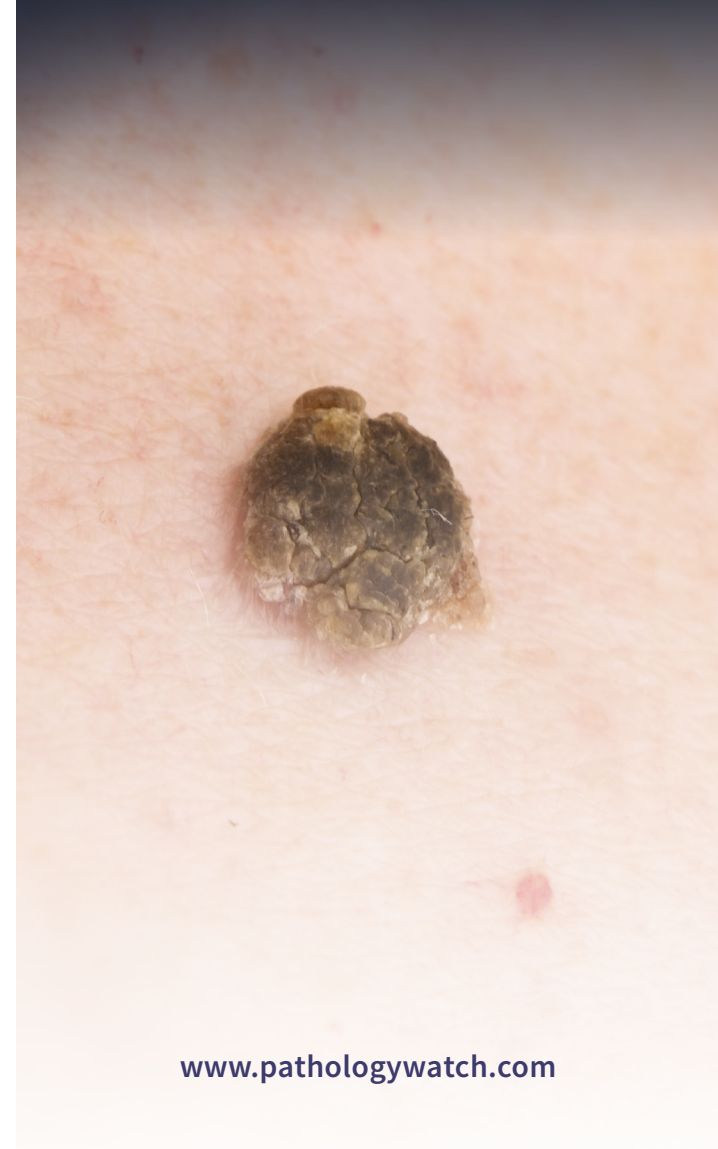


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What Are Seborrheic Keratoses, Anyway? Are They Dangerous?

The name, “seborrheic keratosis,” makes this growth sound much scarier than what it really is. Seborrheic keratoses are a common type of noncancerous skin growth. People tend to develop them more commonly as they age. Not only are these growths harmless, but they are also not contagious.



What Does a Seborrheic Keratosis Look Like?

A seborrheic keratosis usually appears on the face, chest, head, shoulders, or back. While it is possible to develop a single growth, many people develop multiple growths at a time.

A seborrheic keratosis tends to have the following characteristics:

- **Looks waxy or wart-like**
- **Ranges in color from white to black; however, most are tan or brown**
- **Appears as though it is “pasted on”**
- **Has a scaly surface**
- **Is round or oval in shape**
- **Ranges in size from very small to larger than 1 inch across**
- **Causes no pain, though it may itch**



What Causes Seborrheic Keratoses?

The exact cause of seborrheic keratoses is unknown. However, the following reasons may play a role in the development of these growths:

Genetics: Seborrheic keratoses seem to run in families. Some people seem to inherit a disposition to get many of them.

Sun damage: Skin that has been exposed to a lot of sun may be more likely to develop these growths. However, growths also appear on skin that is always covered from the sun.

Normal aging: People tend to get more of these growths as they age. You're generally more likely to develop them if you are over the age of 50.

