

Patient Information for Atypical nevus syndrome

Overview

People with hundreds of moles and a family history of skin cancer are said to have atypical nevus syndrome. A mole is a type of nevus. An atypical mole has an irregular shape, a varied color, and unclear borders.

Those with atypical moles may be at increased risk for developing skin cancer (melanoma), with the risk increasing with the number of atypical moles present.

Who's At Risk

People with atypical mole syndrome have a history of melanoma in their family (parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, and uncles).

Signs & Symptoms

- Atypical moles may appear anywhere on the skin.
- In atypical nevus syndrome, at least one mole will be larger than a pencil eraser (6 mm).
- Atypical moles have variations in color within one nevus, ranging from pink to reddish-brown to dark brown.
- People with atypical nevus syndrome may have hundreds of moles of varying sizes and colors.

Self-Care Guidelines

The best way to prevent skin cancer is to protect yourself from ultraviolet (UV) light:

- Avoid exposing your skin to sunlight during peak sun hours (10 AM to 3 PM).
- Wear protective clothing
- Use high-SPF sunscreen (SPF of 35 or greater)

Examine your skin at least once a month, looking for new moles or changes in existing moles. Report any changes to your health care provider.

When to Seek Medical Care

People with multiple moles should be examined by a dermatologist every 4-12 months depending on their past history and family history.

Treatments Your Physician May Prescribe

Your doctor may recommend that you have a biopsy or surgical removal (excision) of unusual-appearing moles to look for melanoma.

Atypical nevus syndrome is often tracked with photographs. Your health care provider may want to keep a photographic record of your skin to detect changes.