

Patient Information for Speckled lentiginous nevus

Overview

A speckled lentiginous nevus (also known as nevus spilus) is a skin lesion or birthmark composed of small, dark speckles superimposed on a larger tan or brown area of skin. These birthmarks most often occur on the chest, abdomen, and back, although they may occur at any body location. They are usually present at birth or appear during the first year of life. They are caused by a defect in pigment-producing skin cells. These lesions are benign (harmless). It is rare for a speckled lentiginous nevus to become malignant.

Who's At Risk

Nevus spilus is slightly more common in whites. They are not spread from person to person.

Signs & Symptoms

Most speckled lentiginous nevi are present at birth or show up during the first year. Most are 2-5 cm in diameter, with the speckles being 1-3 mm on average. Occasionally, the nevus may involve a larger area of skin.

Self-Care Guidelines

Monitor the lesion for changes in size and color, and report any changes to a dermatologist. To reduce exposure to harmful ultraviolet (UV) light and prevent skin cancer, use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30, and wear sun-protective clothing.

When to Seek Medical Care

You may notice a change in color or an increase in lesion size over time. While these lesions are benign, meaning that they normally do not transform into cancer, see your dermatologist if you are concerned.

Treatments Your Physician May Prescribe

- Most speckled lentiginous nevi do not need treatment, and they can be monitored by observation.
- If you have a nevus in a cosmetically sensitive area, you may wish to camouflage it with a product such as Dermablend or Covermark.
- The lesion can be removed by surgery, but the entire lesion must be excised to prevent recurrence. If the lesion is large, significant scarring may result from removal.
- Lasers can be used to treat the discoloration, but the results with this are variable and sometimes unsatisfactory.