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URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/moles.html>

Moles

Also called: Nevus

Moles are growths on the skin. They happen when pigment cells in the skin, called melanocytes, grow in clusters. Moles are very common. Most people have between 10 and 40 moles. A person may develop new moles from time to time, usually until about age 40. In older people, they tend to fade away.

Moles are usually pink, tan or brown. They can be flat or raised. They are usually round or oval and no larger than a pencil eraser.

About one out of every ten people has at least one unusual (or atypical) mole that looks different from an ordinary mole. They are called dysplastic nevi. They may be more likely than ordinary moles to develop into **melanoma** [<https://medlineplus.gov/melanoma.html>], a type of skin cancer. You should have a health care professional check your moles if they look unusual, grow larger, change in color or outline, or in any other way.

NIH: National Cancer Institute

Start Here

- Common Moles, Dysplastic Nevi, and Risk of Melanoma [<https://www.cancer.gov/types/skin/moles-fact-sheet>]  (National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/tipos/piel/hoja-informativa-lunares>]
- Moles [<https://www.aocd.org/page/Moles?>] (American Osteopathic College of Dermatology)
- Moles: Overview [<https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/a-z/moles-overview?NoAds>] (American Academy of Dermatology)
- What Does a Mole Look Like? [<https://www.cancer.gov/types/skin/mole-photos>]  (National Cancer Institute)

Treatments and Therapies

- Nevus Removal [<https://www.nevus.org/nevus-removal>] (Nevus Outreach, Inc.)
- Products Marketed for Removing Moles and Other Skin Lesions Can Cause Injuries, Scarring [<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/products-marketed-removing-moles-and-other-skin-lesions-can-cause-injuries-scarring>] (Food and Drug Administration)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/articulos-para-el-consumidor-en-espanol/los-productos-comercializados-para-eliminar-lunares-y-otras-carnosidades-en-la-piel-pueden-causar>]
- Treatment Options for Congenital Melanocytic Nevus [<https://www.nevus.org/treatment-options>] (Nevus Outreach, Inc.)

Living With

- Psychological Challenges Associated with CMN [<https://www.nevus.org/psychological-challenges>] (Nevus Outreach, Inc.)

Related Issues

- Birthmarks [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/birthmarks.html>] (Nemours Foundation)

Specifics

- Atypical Moles [<https://www.aocd.org/page/AtypicalMoles?>] (American Osteopathic College of Dermatology)
- What does LCMN (Large Congenital Melanocytic Nevus) Mean? [<https://www.nevus.org/what-is-cmn>] (Nevus Outreach, Inc.)

Images

- Mole (Nevus) [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/common-acquired-nevus-mole/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)
- Mole, Atypical (Atypical Nevus) [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/atypical-nevus/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Nevus [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Nevus%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Survey of Australian primary eyecare management of choroidal nevus patients. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40266266>]
- Article: Prognostic Value of Nevus-Associated Melanoma in Patients with Melanoma. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/39893342>]
- Article: Nevus-associated acral melanoma has lower risk of recurrence and mortality than... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/39577696>]
- Moles -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Nevus%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+2+Years%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- American Academy of Dermatology [<https://www.aad.org/?NoAds>]
- Find a Dermatologic Surgeon [<https://www.asds.net/find-a-dermatologic-surgeon/advanced/true>] (American Society for Dermatologic Surgery)
- Find a Dermatologist [<https://find-a-derm.aad.org/>] (American Academy of Dermatology)
- National Cancer Institute [<https://www.cancer.gov/>] 
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.gov/espanol>]
- National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/>] 
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/es/portal-en-espanol>]

Children

- Congenital Melanocytic Nevus (Birthmark) [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/congenital-melanocytic-nevus/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)

Patient Handouts

- Birthmarks - pigmented [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000828.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000828.htm>]
- Giant congenital nevus [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001453.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001453.htm>]

- Skin self-exam [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000711.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
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MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

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Related Health Topics

- Skin Pigmentation Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/skinpigmentationdisorders.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Moles* is the National Cancer Institute [<http://www.cancer.gov/>]

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