

# Let's Talk About...

## Skin Disorder: Spitz nevi

### What is a Spitz nevus?

**Nevus** [NEE-vus] is a medical name for a mole. A Spitz nevus is a type of unusual but non-cancerous mole. It is more common in young people and children. If your child has more than one Spitz nevus, the moles are referred to as **Spitz nevi** [NEE-vahy].

### What causes Spitz nevi?

Spitz nevi are caused by the skin producing too many skin cells, called **melanocytes** [MEL-uh-nuh-sahytz]. These skin cells make the pigment that gives skin color.

### What are the signs of a Spitz nevus?

A Spitz nevus most often looks like a pink, raised bump on the skin. However, it can also appear as a brown, black, or blue flat mark or raised bump. When it first appears, it often grows for a few months. Once it stops growing, it usually stays the same size, shape, and color for a few years. After that point, the mole usually gets smaller and can even disappear.

### How is a Spitz nevus diagnosed?

A Spitz nevus can sometimes be diagnosed during an exam by a dermatologist (skin doctor). Sometimes, a **biopsy** [BAHY-op-see] — a type of skin test where the mole is removed and examined — is necessary to diagnose the skin disorder.

### How are Spitz nevi treated?

Most Spitz nevi are not treated. Instead, most are watched over time and monitored for any changes in size, color, and shape. If a Spitz nevus shows concerning signs or changes, it is often removed with minor skin surgery. **Spitz nevi should not be treated or removed by scraping, lasers, burning, or freezing.** Talk to your child's doctor about the best treatment for your child's moles.



### How do I monitor my child's moles?

Check your child's moles regularly. Call your child's doctor if you have any concerns or if you see any changes, such as a mole that:

- Grows larger
- Changes color (for example, turns black or has multiple colors)
- Changes shape
- Bleeds
- Itches or becomes painful

If a Spitz nevus has been removed from your child's skin, check the scar regularly and call your child's doctor if you see any changes within the scar.

## How can I protect my child's skin?

Protect your child's skin from the sun. This helps prevent concerning changes to their Spitz nevi. When your child is outdoors, protect their skin by:

- **Using sunscreen on exposed skin** and reapplying it often.
- **Wearing long sleeves and pants when possible.** Look for clothing with a high **UV Protection Factor (UPF).**
- **Avoiding mid-day sun.** Tell your child to stay in the shade when possible.

## Questions for my doctor

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## Notes

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