



## **Sebaceous (Epidermoid) Cysts**

A Sebaceous, or Epidermal Cyst, is a small, freely movable lump under the skin that appears when cells from the skin's surface move underneath the skin and multiply. These cells from the wall of the cyst and secrete a soft, yellowish, cheese-like substance called Keratin, which fills the cyst. If the wall is ruptured, the Keratin is discharged into the surrounding skin, which causes irritation and inflammation.

The cysts may remain small for years or they may gradually increase in size. They are less common in children, but very common in adults. Girls and boys are affected equally. Sebaceous Cysts are not cancerous.

### **Symptoms**

A cyst produces a movable, round, smooth-surfaced mass (lump) that varies in size from a few millimeters to several centimeters. Sebaceous Cysts appear primarily on the face, ears, chest, and back, but can occur on almost anywhere on the body.

A cyst may disappear on its own or persist indefinitely. Some cysts get larger over time, especially those that are squeezed or bumped.

### **Treatment**

No treatment is usually needed for a Sebaceous Cyst, unless it is infected or inflamed. Infected cysts are usually treated with antibiotics or by incising (cutting open) and draining the cyst. If a cyst is repeatedly inflamed, your physician may need to remove it surgically. Surgical removal will result in a scar.