



Epidermal Cysts

Epidermal cysts, also called epithelial or sebaceous cysts, usually occur on the face, scalp, and nape of the neck or back. Most epidermal cysts are formed by overproduction of keratin (a protein) with no way for the keratin to get to the surface of the skin. The keratin accumulates in a sac-like structure like a balloon. Trauma to the skin or an ingrown hair may predispose to the formation of a cyst.

Epidermal cysts may be observed for years, often cause no trouble and may go away spontaneously. If they become red, tender or drain, treatment may be desirable. Antibiotics can be prescribed to decrease the inflammation and, in some cases, the cyst will be injected with steroids.

Definitive treatment of an epidermal cyst, however, is surgical excision. Surgery removes the entire epidermal lining, eliminating the risk of recurrence.

This is the medical opinion of Savannah River Dermatology. For additional information, please contact our office at 706-691-7079.