How do dermatologists diagnose seborrheic keratoses?

In most cases, a dermatologist can tell if your skin growth is a seborrheic keratosis by looking at it. Sometimes, a seborrheic keratosis can look like a skin cancer. If it does, the dermatologist will remove the growth so that it can be looked at under a microscope. This is the only way to tell for sure whether a growth is skin cancer.

How do dermatologists treat seborrheic keratoses?

Because seborrheic keratoses are harmless, they most often do not need treatment. A dermatologist may remove a seborrheic keratosis when it:

- Looks like a skin cancer
- Gets caught on clothing or jewelry
- Becomes irritated easily
- Seems unsightly to a patient

If the growth looks like skin cancer, your dermatologist will likely shave off the growth with a blade or scrape it off. This will allow a specially trained doctor to look for skin cancer cells under a microscope.

Other treatments for seborrheic keratoses include:

- **Cryotherapy:** The dermatologist applies liquid nitrogen, a very cold liquid, to the growth with a cotton swab or spray gun. This destroys the growth. The seborrheic keratosis tends to fall off within days. Sometimes a blister forms under the seborrheic keratosis and dries into a scab-like crust. The crust will fall off.
- **Electrosurgery and curettage:** Electrosurgery (electrocautery) involves numbing the growth with an anesthetic and using an electric current to destroy the growth. A scoop-shaped surgical instrument, a curette, is used to scrape off the treated growth. This is the curettage. The patient does not need stitches. There may be a small amount of bleeding. Sometimes the patient needs only electrosurgery or just curettage.

Outcome

After removal of a seborrheic keratosis, the skin may be lighter than the surrounding skin. This usually fades with time. Sometimes it is permanent. Most removed seborrheic keratoses do not return. But a new one may occur elsewhere.

Source: [https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/a-z/seborrheic-keratoses-treatment](https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/a-z/seborrheic-keratoses-treatment)