



DERMATOSIS PAPULOSA NIGRA IN SKIN OF COLOUR

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WHAT IS DERMATOSIS PAPULOSA NIGRA?

Dermatitis Papulosa Nigra (DPN) is a benign skin condition characterised by the appearance of small, dark bumps or spots on the skin, particularly on the face, neck, and upper chest. It is a common condition, primarily affecting individuals with darker skin tones, especially those of African or Afro-Caribbean descent.

DPN typically starts to appear in adulthood, often during the third or fourth decade of life, and becomes more noticeable with age. These bumps are usually asymptomatic (not causing pain or itching) and do not pose any health risks. They are often mistaken for moles or other types of skin growths but are distinct in their appearance and nature.

UNIQUE CONSIDERATIONS FOR SKIN OF COLOUR

Dermatitis Papulosa Nigra (DPN) is more common in individuals with darker skin tones, particularly those of African, African-Caribbean, and Asian descent. Individuals with skin of colour are more prone to post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation and keloid formation, so it is important to use treatments tailored to skin of colour to avoid scarring.

KEY MESSAGES:

DPN is a benign condition that predominantly affects individuals with skin of colour

The condition is typically harmless but may be of cosmetic concern.

Consult a dermatologists for treatment options to remove DPN or reduce their appearance



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Although DPN is harmless, the appearance of dark spots can impact self-esteem. Consulting a dermatologist can help address both cosmetic concerns and treatment options.

CAUSES AND TRIGGERS

The exact cause of DPN is not fully understood, but it is thought to be related to genetics and sun exposure. People with a family history of DPN are more likely to develop the condition themselves, indicating a hereditary predisposition. While DPN does not have any known direct link to underlying health problems, it is more commonly found in individuals with darker skin, where it tends to be more prominent. Sun exposure may contribute to the appearance of DPN, as UV rays can encourage the development of more dark spots or bumps on the skin.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

DPN typically presents as small, smooth, dome-shaped bumps that are dark brown to black in colour. These growths are usually flat or slightly raised, with a smooth surface. They vary in size from tiny spots to larger lumps but are usually no more than 5mm in diameter.

The spots are most commonly found on areas of the body that have been exposed to the sun, including: the face (especially around the eyes, cheeks, and forehead), neck, upper chest and shoulders

DPN does not generally cause any pain or discomfort, although in some cases, individuals may experience slight irritation if the bumps are scratched or rubbed frequently.

IS DERMATOSIS PAPULOSA NIGRA HARMFUL?

DPN is completely harmless and does not cause any significant health problems. The bumps are benign (non-cancerous) and do not turn into skin cancer. However, in some cases, they may be cosmetically undesirable, especially if they become more numerous or noticeable with age.

If the growths become irritated or infected (which is uncommon), they may need to be treated. It is important not to try to remove them on your own to avoid complications such as scarring or infection.

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DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis of DPN is usually made through a physical examination by a healthcare professional, who will assess the appearance of the bumps and confirm that they are characteristic of DPN. In rare cases, if the diagnosis is unclear or if there is concern about another type of skin growth, a biopsy may be performed to rule out other conditions.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

In most cases, DPN does not require treatment unless the growths become bothersome or unsightly. If treatment is desired, several options are available:

- **Cryotherapy (Freezing):** This is a common treatment method in which liquid nitrogen is applied to the growths to freeze them, causing them to fall off after a few days.
- **Laser Treatment:** Laser therapy can be used to target and remove DPN growths by destroying the pigment or tissue in the affected area. This method is often used for people who have multiple growths or want a quicker solution.
- **Electrocautery:** This procedure involves using an electric current to burn off the growths. It is effective for smaller spots.
- **Surgical Removal:** In some cases, surgical excision may be recommended to remove larger or more bothersome growths. This is usually performed under local anaesthesia.

These treatments are generally safe, but it is important to consult with a dermatologist before opting for any procedure, as they can provide guidance on the most appropriate treatment for your individual case.

CONCLUSION

Dermatosis Papulosa Nigra (DPN) is a benign and common skin condition that typically affects individuals with darker skin tones. Although it does not cause any health risks, it may be of cosmetic concern for some people. Treatment options are available if needed, and it is important to seek medical advice if you are unsure about the condition or if the bumps cause irritation or change in appearance.

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Produced | January 2025
Next review date | January 2028