

Rodent Ulcers

Definition

A malignant skin tumour involving cancerous changes of basal skin cells.

Causes, Incidence, and Risk Factors

- A new skin growth that ulcerates, bleeds easily, or does not heal well could indicate development of basal cell skin cancer.
- Skin cancer has a high cure rate if treated early, but neglect can allow the cancer to spread, causing disability or death.
- Basal cell cancer is the most common form of malignant skin cancer.
- It accounts for about 75% of all skin cancers.
- The incidence of skin cancer has increased greatly.
- In 1990, 600,000 Americans were diagnosed with either basal cell cancer or squamous cell cancer, up from 400,000 in 1980.

- Over 90% of basal cell skin cancers occur on areas of skin that are regularly exposed to sunlight or other ultraviolet radiation.
- This is considered the primary cause of most skin cancers.
- Other risks include a genetic predisposition (basal cell skin cancers are more common in those who have light colored skin, blue or green eyes, blond or red hair) and over-exposure to X-rays or other forms of radiation.
- Exposure to arsenic, which may be present in certain herbicides, is another risk factor for developing skin cancers.

- Most basal cell cancers occur on areas of the body that are regularly exposed to ultraviolet radiation (sunlight). They may also occur on the scalp.
- The onset most commonly occurs after age 40.

- Basal cells are normal skin cells.
- They may develop cancerous changes, causing a patch or lump that is painless.
- The lump may grow slowly, ulcerate, and never heal completely.
- It usually remains local and almost never spreads to other parts of the body, but it may continue to grow and invade nearby tissues and structures, including the nerves, bones, and brain.
- The tumour may be very small, growing to 1 or 2 centimeters in diameter after several years of growth.

Prevention

- Minimize sun exposure.
- Wear protective clothing such as hats, long-sleeved shirts, long skirts, or pants.
- Avoid midday sun.
- Use high-quality sunscreens, SPF 15
- Apply 30min before exposure and frequently thereafter.

- Examine the skin regularly for development of suspicious growths or changes in an existing skin lesion.
- A new growth that ulcerates, bleeds easily, or is slow to heal is suspicious.
- Suspicious changes in existing growths include change in colour, size, texture, appearance, or the development of pain, inflammation, bleeding or itching.

Symptoms

- A skin lesion, growth, or bump located on the face, ear, neck, chest, back, or scalp
- Pearly or waxy appearance
- White or light pink, flesh coloured, or brown flat or slightly raised
- Visible blood vessels in the lesion or adjacent skin
- Appearance of a scar-like lesion without a history of injury to the skin in that area

Signs and Tests

- A biopsy and an examination of suspicious skin lesions may show basal cell carcinoma.

Treatment

Treatment varies depending on the size, depth, and location of the cancer.

The carcinoma is removed through one of these procedures:

- Scraping
- Cauterization (burning)
- Surgical removal,
- Cryosurgery
- Radiation

Prognosis

- Early treatment results in a cure rate of more than 95%.
- New sites of basal cell cancer can occur, so prevention should be diligent.
- Regular checkups

Complications

Invasion of adjacent tissues or structures, causing damage to their structure and function.





Nasal Fold Basal Cell







Basal Cell Carcinoma



Pigmented Basal Cell



Superficial basal cell carcinoma.



Cystic basal cell carcinoma.

Neglected Rodent Ulcer

