

Choroidal Nevus

Patient information leaflet

What has been found

A choroidal nevus is a flat, pigmented patch in the layer of blood vessels beneath the retina. It is the eye's equivalent of a freckle or a mole on the skin, and like them it is common and almost always harmless.

It causes no symptoms. Yours was found during a routine examination of the back of the eye, which is the usual way they are discovered.

Why we photograph and measure it

Very occasionally a pigmented patch in the eye is not a simple freckle, or a freckle changes over time. The purpose of monitoring is not to treat the nevus — nothing needs treating — but to be certain it stays the same.

At each visit it is photographed, and its thickness and the layers around it are measured with scans. Comparing those images over time is far more reliable than any single examination, which is why the first visit establishes a record rather than a verdict.

What is looked at

- Its width and thickness, compared with previous measurements
- Whether any fluid has appeared beneath the retina near it
- Changes in the pigment on its surface
- Its position in relation to the optic nerve

How often

Usually every six to twelve months at first. If it is unchanged over several visits, the interval is extended. Many people are eventually reviewed only at their routine eye examinations.

Tell me if you notice

- Blurred vision or a change in the vision of that eye
- Distortion of straight lines
- Flashing lights or a new shower of floaters
- A shadow or missing area in your vision

These are unlikely, and there are commoner explanations for all of them. They are listed so that you know what would be worth an earlier appointment rather than waiting for the next scheduled one.

It is worth mentioning the nevus to any eye doctor who examines you in future, and taking a copy of your images if you move away — comparison with the earliest photograph is what makes monitoring meaningful.

Reviewed by Dr. Aysun Yucel Gencoglu, MD, FEBO, FICO. Further patient information on retinal conditions is published by the American Society of Retina Specialists at asrs.org/patients.

Notes for you from today's consultation

