

SOLAR LENTIGO/LENTIGINES (LIVER SPOTS)

Solar lentigines are benign growths. They appear as flat, brown, freckle-like areas. Most commonly they occur on the face, neck, and the outer aspects of the arms. They are related to chronic sun exposure.

Some people refer to solar lentigines as liver spots. These growths have nothing to do with any liver problem or any other internal illness. They are totally benign. They indicate sun damage in the skin and not old age.

Solar lentigines are slightly different from true freckles because freckles go away in the winter and reappear in the summer. The sun-induced lentigines are present year round. They can slowly darken with time and for this reason people consider having them removed.

If these growths are removed liquid nitrogen treatment is used. This causes a small scab to form at the site of the brown area. There is a separate patient information sheet, which describes the liquid nitrogen treatment in greater detail.

In general, these sun-induced growths are totally harmless. They can be a problem because of their appearance. They are not precancerous. If any individual growth would seem to change in terms of rapid growth, bleeding, or crusting, please point this out to me.

If you have any other questions regarding these growths, please do not hesitate to ask me after you read this.