



Cosmetic Mole Removal

What is a mole (naevus)?

A mole (also called a *naevus*) is a common skin growth made up of pigment-producing cells called melanocytes. Most moles are harmless, but some people choose to have them removed for **cosmetic reasons** or if the mole is irritated by clothing, shaving, or jewellery.

Treatment Options

1. Shave Removal

- **What it is:**
The mole is shaved off at the surface of the skin using a fine blade.
- **When it's used:**
Best suited for raised moles that are not deeply rooted.
- **What to expect:**
 - Local anaesthetic is used to numb the area.
 - The mole is shaved flat with the surrounding skin.
 - The base may be cauterised (sealed) with a diathermy device to control bleeding.
 - A small flat wound remains and will heal over 1–2 weeks.
- **Scar:**
Usually leaves a **flat, lighter, or slightly pink mark**. Rarely, mild regrowth or a raised scar (hypertrophic or keloid) can occur.

2. Excision (Surgical Removal)

- **What it is:**
The mole and a small margin of normal skin are cut out using a scalpel.
- **When it's used:**
For **larger, deeper, or suspicious moles**, or when the goal is complete removal.
- **What to expect:**
 - Local anaesthetic is injected.
 - The mole is excised and the wound is closed with fine sutures.
 - Sutures are removed after 7–14 days, depending on the area.
- **Scar:**
A **fine line scar** remains. It fades over time but may stay slightly visible. Scar quality depends on skin type, healing, and post-operative care.

3. Diathermy (Electrosurgery)

- **What it is:**
A heat-based technique that removes or smooths small moles or skin tags using an electric current.
- **When it's used:**
For **small, superficial, or fleshy lesions**.
- **What to expect:**
 - Area is numbed with local anaesthetic.
 - The lesion is cauterised with a fine tip, sealing blood vessels as it removes tissue.
 - The treated area forms a light scab that heals in 1–2 weeks.
- **Scar:**
Usually minimal. Occasionally a pale or slightly pink mark remains.

Aftercare

- Keep the area clean and dry for 24 hours.
- Apply a thin layer of antibiotic ointment or petroleum jelly daily.
- Avoid sun exposure until the area has fully healed (use SPF 30+).
- Do not pick at scabs.
- You may resume normal activities immediately, but avoid swimming or soaking until healed.

Risks and Complications

All procedures carry small risks, including:

- Redness, swelling, or bruising
- Infection (rare)
- Bleeding or delayed healing
- Pigment change (lighter or darker skin at the site)
- Scarring (may be raised or stretched)
- Regrowth of the mole (especially after shave removal)

Cost and Medicare

- **Cosmetic mole removals** are generally **not covered by Medicare** unless there is a medical indication (e.g. suspicion of cancer or irritation).
- Costs vary depending on size, number, and method used.