



DERM Notes

Dermatology Clinical Pocket Guide

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History Taking in Dermatology

ID: Age, race, sex, occupation, hobbies

HPI:

- a. When did the rash/lesion start or was first noticed?
- b. Where did it start?
- c. Symptoms: E.g., does it itch, hurt, burn?
- d. Evolution: How has it spread or developed over time?
- e. What makes the rash or symptoms worse? E.g., heat, cold, sun, exercise, season
- f. What therapy has been tried?—dose, duration, frequency of actual use

Contacts (where appropriate): Pets or farm animal contact, travel, motel stays

PMHx: Diabetes, hypertension, atopy (eczema, asthma, hay fever), previous skin cancers or other skin problems; STDs, HIV, blood transfusions

Medications: Dosage listed for any derm drugs; specific topical steroid names

Allergies (& specific reaction)

Habits: Smoking, alcohol, drug abuse

FamHx: Psoriasis, melanoma, atopy, genetic conditions (e.g., neurofibromatosis)

Constitutional symptoms (if relevant: infection, previous malignancy): Headache, fever, chills, sweats, fatigue, weakness, anorexia, weight loss

Review of systems: Based on clinical scenario. E.g., If autoimmune connective tissue disease is in the differential, ask about arthralgias, myalgias, aphthous ulcers, keratoconjunctivitis sicca, Raynaud's phenomenon, neurologic or renal problems.



Approach to Describing Skin Lesions

Mnemonic: LEST. CABS

Descriptors

Location & Distribution

Symmetrical, asymmetrical, sun-exposed, flexures/extensors, acral (hands/feet)

Erythema

Erythematous or nonerythematous lesions &/or underlying skin

Surface Features

Crusting, rough, smooth, scaly, warty

Type

Cyst, macule, papule, pustule, ulcer, vesicle

Color

Blue, brown, pink, purple, red, white

Arrangement

Single or multiple, discrete, unilateral, generalized, disseminated, grouped, annular, gyrate, dermatomal, linear, serpiginous

Border & Shape

Well- or poorly defined, active edge, round, oval, irregular, pedunculated

Special Sites/Systemic

Scalp, mouth, nails, genitalia, systemic disease, constitutional symptoms



Terminology of Dermatology		
Lesion	Definition	Examples
Abscess	Accumulation of pus in the dermis or subcutaneous tissue	Perianal abscess, <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> infection
Annular	Ring-shaped	Granuloma annulare, tinea corporis
Atrophy	Depressed surface due to a thinned epidermis and/or dermis and/or subcutis	Lichen sclerosus, necrobiosis lipoidica, prolonged potent topical steroid use
Bulla (blister)	A large, circumscribed, fluid-containing elevation (>5 mm)	Bullous impetigo, bullous pemphigoid, pemphigus vulgaris
Burrow	Linear S-shaped elevated channel in the epidermis	Scabies
Carbuncle	Inflammatory nodules or abscess of numerous contiguous hair follicles	Hidradenitis suppurativa
Comedo	Plugged pilosebaceous follicle containing serum & keratin. Closed = whitehead; open = blackhead	Acne
Crust (scab)	Dried serum, pus, or blood (usually preceded by vesicle, bulla, or pustule)	Herpes simplex or VZV, impetigo
Cyst	Nodule containing fluid, cells or keratin	Epidermoid cyst, mucous cyst, pilar cyst
<i>(Continued text on following page)</i>		



Terminology of Dermatology (Continued)		
Lesion	Definition	Examples
Ecchymosis ("bruise")	Large, confluent area of purpura	Postsurgery or trauma
Erosion	Partial loss of epidermis. Heals without scarring.	Eczema, lichen simplex, pemphigus vulgaris
Erythema	Redness that blanches on pressure	Cellulitis, erysipelas, erythroderma, sunburn
Excoriation	Shallow abrasion due to scratching. Linear or pinpoint erosions or crusts.	Dermatitis
Exudate	Serum, blood, or pus accumulated on the skin surface	Acute eczema
Fissure	Linear split in epidermis &/or crack in (skin) dermis	Eczema
Folliculitis	Pustule involving a hair follicle	Folliculitis due to <i>S. aureus</i>
Furuncle	Deep necrotizing type of folliculitis	Furuncle due to <i>S. aureus</i> , hidradenitis suppurativa
Keratin/horn	Rough, uneven surface due to accumulation of keratin. Hard to pick off, unlike crust.	Actinic keratosis, corn, squamous cell carcinoma, wart
Lichenification	Focal area of thickened skin with accentuation of skin lines due to rubbing/scratching	Atopic dermatitis, lichen simplex chronicus

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