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SEBACEOUS GLAND DISORDERS

The sebaceous glands are small glands found throughout all haired skin. They secrete an oily secretion (sebum) which coats the skin and hair, helping to retain moisture and keep the coat glossy. Occasionally these glands malfunction causing the disorders listed below:

1. **SEBACEOUS CYST** - Glandular secretions become trapped below the skin causing solitary firm nodules. These are not painful but may break open, drain and require surgical removal. They are diagnosed by aspirating the lump and evaluating the cells with a microscope.

2. **SEBACEOUS HYPERPLASIA/SEBACEOUS ADENOMAS** - seen commonly in older dogs. Usually firm, elevated, well defined cauliflower-like nodules (resembling warts) which occur on the trunk, over the nose and occasionally on the eyelids. These are benign growths meaning that they do not metastasize or spread to other parts of the body. They usually are more of a cosmetic concern rather than a medical problem unless they ulcerate and break open or are located on an eyelid. The treatment for these growths is to surgically remove them, depending on their location and the number of growths.

3. **SEBACEOUS GLAND ADENOCARCINOMAS** - These are also tumors of the sebaceous glands but are more aggressive. Any ulcerated, rapidly growing, invasive appearing growth should be surgically removed as soon as possible.

It is good to continually check your pets for lumps or growths and bring them to the attention of your veterinarian. Many sebaceous gland disorders can be diagnosed by their appearance; however, some may require further diagnostics such as an aspirate or a biopsy. Your veterinarian can advise you regarding what is best for your pet.