

MORPHOLOGY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LESIONS

Primary:

Macule – flat, circumscribed skin discoloration that lacks surface elevation or depression (freckle, café au lait)

Papule – elevated, solid lesion <0.5 cm diameter (molluscum contagiosum, intradermal nevi, basal cell carcinoma)

Plaque – elevated, solid “confluence of papules” > 0.5 cm diameter that lacks a deep component (psoriasis, eczema, T. corporis)

Patch – flat, circumscribed skin discoloration; a very large macule (vitiligo)

Nodule – elevated, solid lesion <0.5 cm in diameter; a larger, deeper papule (rheumatoid nodule, lipoma)

Wheal – firm, edematous plaque that is evanescent and pruritic; a hive (urticaria, dermographism)

Vesicle – papule that contains clear fluid; a blister (herpes simplex, herpes zoster)

Bulla – localized fluid collection > 0.5 cm in diameter; a large vesicle (pemphigus vulgaris, bullow impetigo)

Pustule – papule that contains purulent material (folliculitis, impetigo, acne)

Cyst – nodule that contains fluid or semisolid material (acne, epidermal inclusion cyst)

Secondary:

Crust – a collection of cellular debris, dried serum, and blood; a scab. Antecedent primary lesion usually a vesicle, bulla, or pustule

Erosion – a partial focal loss of epidermis; heals without scarring

Ulcer – a full-thickness, focal loss of epidermis and dermis; heals with scarring

Fissure – vertical loss of epidermis and dermis with sharply defined walls; crack in skin

Excoriation – linear erosion induced by scratching

Scar – a collection of new connective tissue’ may be hypertrophic or atrophic.

Scale – thick stratum corneum that results from hyperproliferation or increased cohesion of keratinocytes