

# Melanocyte

Melanocytes Listeni/mɛˈlænəsɪt/ are melanin-producing cells located in the bottom layer (the stratum basale) of the skin's [epidermis](#), the middle layer of the eye (the uvea), the inner ear, meninges, bones, and heart.

Melanin is the pigment primarily responsible for skin color. Once synthesised, melanin is contained in a special organelle called a melanosome and moved along arm-like structures called dendrites, so as to reach the keratinocytes.

Although CNS [melanoma](#) most commonly presents as metastasis from a distant lesion, primary CNS melanoma can occur and arises from melanocytic cells intrinsic to the CNS.

The melanocyte is derived from the [neural crest](#) (NC) in the forebrain and migrates to the meninges from a common migratory precursor in the trunk. Truncal meninges are believed to come from paraxial somitic mesoderm, not NC. Tumors from melanocytes can be benign [melanocytomas](#), malignant melanomas, and intermediate-grade melanocytomas

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Melanocytes may cause primary melanocytic neoplasms which can be classified as [melanocytoma](#) (benign end of the spectrum), intermediate grade melanocytic neoplasms, and primary malignant [melanoma](#). These neoplasms can be differentiated histologically based on the identification of mitotic activity, cytological [atypia](#), [necrosis](#), and invasion of the adjacent structures.

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