

Skin Cancer: Treatable and Beatable with Early Detection

Is getting a skin cancer screening important?

Yes! The most common types of skin cancer, basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), can be cured if caught early and properly treated. When melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, is detected before it spreads, it also has a high cure rate. Dermatologists offer free skin cancer screenings because these screenings can help find skin cancers early when they are the most treatable and beatable.

If something suspicious is found during your skin cancer screening, you should immediately make an appointment to see a dermatologist for a follow-up examination.

Who gets skin cancer?

Each year, millions of people get skin cancer. Anyone can get skin cancer. This is why more than 2,000 dermatologists volunteer their time each year to conduct free skin cancer screenings. When caught early and with proper treatment, skin cancer can be cured.

What does skin cancer look like?

● ACTINIC KERATOSES (AK)

These dry, scaly patches or spots are precancerous growths.

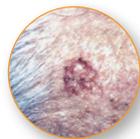
- People who get AKs usually have fair skin.
- Most people see their first AKs after 40 years of age because AKs tend to develop after years of sun exposure.
- AKs usually form on skin that gets lots of sun exposure, such as the head, neck, hands, and forearms.
- Because an AK can progress to a type of skin cancer called squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), treatment is important.



● BASAL CELL CARCINOMA (BCC)

This is the most common type of skin cancer.

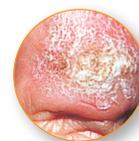
- BCCs frequently develop in people who have fair skin, yet they can occur in people with darker skin.
- BCCs look like a flesh-colored, pearl-like bump or a pinkish patch of skin.
- BCCs develop after years of frequent sun exposure or indoor tanning.
- BCC are common on the head, neck, and arms, yet can form anywhere on the body, including the chest, abdomen, and legs.
- Early diagnosis and treatment for BCC is important. BCC can invade the surrounding tissue and grow into the nerves and bones, causing damage and disfigurement.



● SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA (SCC)

SCC is the second most common type of skin cancer.

- People who have light skin are most likely to develop SCC, yet they can develop in darker-skinned people.
- SCC often looks like a red firm bump, scaly patch, or a sore that heals and then re-opens.
- SCCs tend to form on skin that gets frequent sun exposure, such as the rim of the ear, face, neck, arms, chest, and back. SCC can grow deep in the skin and cause damage and disfigurement. Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent this and stop SCC from spreading to other areas of the body.



● MELANOMA

Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer

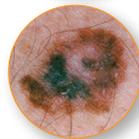
- Melanoma frequently develops in a mole or suddenly appears as a new dark spot on the skin.
- Early diagnosis and treatment are crucial.
- Knowing the ABCDE warning signs of melanoma can help you find an early melanoma.



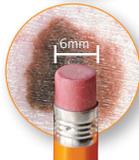
A Stands for **ASYMMETRY**; one half is unlike the other half.



B Stands for **BORDER**; irregular, scalloped or poorly defined border.



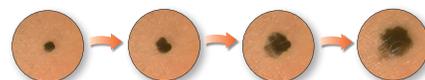
C Stands for **COLOR**; varied from one area to another; shades of tan and brown, black; sometimes white, red or blue



D Stands for **DIAMETER**; while melanomas are usually greater than 6mm (the size of a pencil eraser) when diagnosed, they can be smaller.



E Stands for **EVOLVING**; a mole or skin lesion that looks different from the rest or is changing in size, shape or color.



SKIN CANCER SELF-EXAMINATION

HOW TO CHECK YOUR SPOTS:

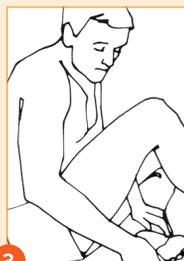
The American Academy of Dermatology encourages everyone to perform periodic skin self-examinations of the entire body and receive a physician skin examination. Since each person's risk of skin cancer differs based on his or her skin type, sun exposure, and family history, a dermatologist can make individual recommendations about how often a person should be screened for skin cancer.



1 Examine body front and back in mirror, then right and left sides, arms raised.



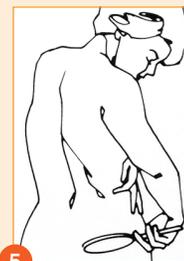
2 Bend elbows, look carefully at forearms, back of upper arms, and palms.



3 Look at backs of legs and feet, spaces between toes, and soles.



4 Examine back of neck and scalp with a hand mirror. Part hair and lift.



5 Finally, check back and buttocks with a hand mirror.

Individuals with a history of melanoma should have a full-body exam at least annually and perform monthly self-exams for new and changing moles.

Checking your skin means taking note of all the spots on your body, from moles to freckles to age spots. Remember, some moles are black, red, or even blue. If you see a new spot or notice something changing, itching or bleeding on your skin, immediately make an appointment to see a dermatologist.

Am I at risk of getting melanoma?

These risk factors significantly increase your risk of getting melanoma:

- **Sun exposure:** Have you spent a lot of time outdoors without protecting yourself from the sun? Have you had bad sunburns, especially blistering sunburns?
- **Light skin:** Do you have fair skin? Although melanoma is more common in people who have light skin, people with skin of color also get melanoma.
- **Family history:** Have any of your first-degree relatives (parent, sibling, or child) had melanoma?
- **Moles:** Do you have more than 50 moles? Has a dermatologist told you that you have atypical moles?
- **Previous melanoma:** Have you had melanoma? This greatly increases your risk of getting another melanoma.

Do you have a story to tell?

If you or a loved one has had skin cancer, tell us your skin cancer story at www.aad.org/spot-skin-cancer/share-your-story.

How can I prevent skin cancer?

Sun exposure is the most preventable risk factor for all skin cancers. Here is what you can do:

- **Generously apply a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen** with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or more to all skin not covered by clothing. "Broad-spectrum" provides protection from both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays. Reapply approximately every two hours, even on cloudy days, and after swimming or sweating.
- **Wear protective clothing**, such as a long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses, where possible.
- **Seek shade** when appropriate. Remember that the sun's rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. If your shadow appears to be shorter than you are, seek shade.
- **Use extra caution near water, snow, and sand** because they reflect and intensify the damaging rays of the sun, which can increase your chances of sunburn.
- **Get vitamin D safely** through a healthy diet that may include vitamin supplements. Don't seek the sun.
- **Avoid tanning beds.** Ultraviolet light from the sun and tanning beds can cause skin cancer and wrinkling. If you want to look tan, consider using a self-tanning product or spray, but continue to use sunscreen with it.

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For more information, free educational downloads, or to find a dermatologist or free screening in your area, visit SpotSkinCancer.org • 1-888-462-DERM