



Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States. Current estimates are that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.



When detected early, skin cancer is highly treatable. Warning signs of skin cancer include any new or suspicious spots on your skin, or any spot that is changing, itching or bleeding.

Who Gets Skin Cancer?

Anyone can get skin cancer, regardless of their skin color. Some people have a higher risk of developing skin cancer than others, including those with one or more of the following:

- Light-colored skin.
- Skin that burns or freckles rather than tans.
- Blond or red hair.
- Blue or green eyes.
- More than 50 moles.
- Irregularly-shaped or darker moles (nevi) called "atypical" or "dysplastic."

Your medical history can also increase your risk of getting skin cancer. You have a much greater risk of developing skin cancer if you have:

- A history of sunburns, especially blistering sunburns.
- Used (or use) indoor tanning devices such as tanning beds and sunlamps.
- Received an organ transplant.
- Had skin cancer (or a blood relative has/had skin cancer).
- A weakened immune system.
- Been exposed to cancer-causing compounds such as arsenic or tar.
- An area of skin that has been badly burned, either in an accident or by the sun.

What Are the Types of Skin Cancer?

The most common types of skin cancer include:

BASAL CELL CARCINOMA

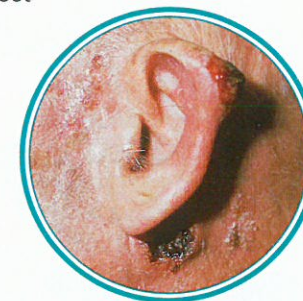
BCC is the most common type of skin cancer. BCC appears on the skin in many shapes and sizes. You may see a dome-shaped growth with visible blood vessels; a shiny, pinkish patch; or a sore that heals and then returns. BCC frequently develops on skin that is exposed to the sun, such as the scalp, face, nose, neck and hands. BCC rarely spreads to other areas of the body, but it can grow deep into tissue and bone if left untreated.



BASAL CELL CARCINOMA

SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA

SCC is the second most common type of skin cancer. SCC appears on the skin in many shapes. You may see a crusted or rough bump; a red, rough flat patch; a dome-shaped bump that grows and bleeds; or a sore that does not heal, or heals and returns. SCC frequently develops on skin that is



SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA

exposed to sun, such as the face, ears, lips, back of the hands, arms and legs.

SCC can also develop on areas of the body that are not exposed to sun, such as inside the mouth or on the genitals. Smoking or chewing tobacco may increase the risk of getting SCC in the mouth or throat, while HPV can also play a role in both oral and genital SCC. Left untreated SCC can spread to other parts of the body, making treatment difficult.

MELANOMA

This is the deadliest form of skin cancer. Melanoma may suddenly appear without warning. It can also develop on normal skin, or from or near an existing mole. New, rapidly growing moles, or moles that change in shape, color or size can be a sign of melanoma. Other early signs of melanoma include moles that bleed or itch.

Melanoma can also develop on the fingernails and toenails. This will look like a brown or black streak in the nail. It may be associated with splitting, redness, pain or bleeding of the nail.

Although melanoma is more common in those with light-colored skin, people with skin of color also get melanoma.

In skin of color, melanoma usually appears on the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet, under a nail, in the mouth or on the genitals.

When caught early and the entire growth is removed, further treatment may not be needed. If further treatment is needed, your dermatologist will discuss your treatment options and make recommendations.

How Can I Prevent Skin Cancer?

Exposure to ultraviolet light, from the sun and indoor tanning devices, is the most preventable risk factor for all types of skin cancers, including melanoma. The following can help you detect and prevent new skin cancers:

Keep all appointments with your dermatologist. When found early, skin cancer is highly treatable.

Perform skin self-exams. Examine your skin as often as your dermatologist recommends. Be sure to check your scalp, ears, palms, soles, genitals and buttocks.

If you notice anything changing, itching or bleeding on your skin, make an appointment to see a board-certified dermatologist. Tell the person who schedules the appointment why you want to see your dermatologist.

Protect your skin every day by:

- **Seeking shade.** Shade helps to protect your skin from the sun's harmful UV rays. This is especially important between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. when the sun's rays are strongest. Any time your shadow is shorter than you are, seek shade.
- **Dressing to protect yourself from the sun** by wearing a lightweight and long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses.

- **Applying sunscreen to all skin that clothing won't cover,** using a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF 30 or higher. Apply sunscreen to all exposed skin when you are going to be outside, even on a cloudy day. Reapply approximately every two hours, or after swimming or sweating.
- **Using extra caution near water, snow and sand.** These reflect and intensify the damaging rays of the sun.
- **Avoid tanning — both indoors and out.** Ultraviolet light from the sun and tanning beds can cause skin cancer and premature skin aging. If you want to look like you've been in the sun, consider using a sunless self-tanning product, but you should continue to apply sunscreen with it.

A board-certified dermatologist is a medical doctor who specializes in the diagnosis and medical, surgical and cosmetic treatment of skin, hair and nail conditions. To learn more about skin cancer or to find a board-certified dermatologist in your area, visit aad.org/skincancer or call toll-free (888) 462-DERM (3376).

Visit the SPOT Skin Cancer™ website — SpotSkinCancer.org — to learn how to perform a skin self-exam, download a body mole map for tracking changes on your skin and find free skin cancer screenings in your area. Those affected by skin cancer can also share their story via the website and download free materials to educate others in their community.

To Learn More

The American Academy of Dermatology is your trusted source for expert information on skin, hair and nail health.

Visit aad.org to:

- Learn the signs and symptoms of, treatments for, and tips for managing a variety of skin, hair and nail conditions.
- Watch videos with simple tips on how to care for your skin, hair and nails.
- Find updates on the latest medical and cosmetic treatments.
- Locate a board-certified dermatologist in your area.

All content solely developed by:



**AMERICAN ACADEMY of
DERMATOLOGY | ASSOCIATION**

Copyright © by the American Academy of Dermatology and the American Academy of Dermatology Association. Images used with permission of the American Academy of Dermatology National Library of Dermatologic Teaching Slides.

American Academy of Dermatology
P.O. Box 1968, Des Plaines, IL 60017
AAD Public Information Center: (888) 462-DERM (3376)
AAD Member Resource Center: (866) 503-SKIN (7546)
Web: aad.org

ITEM: 40_PAM14



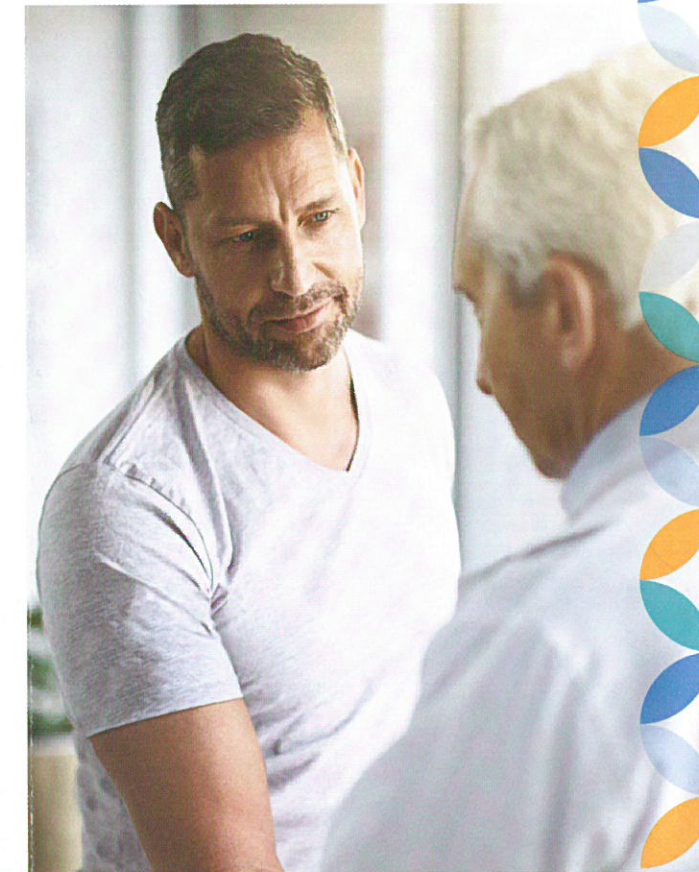
Get connected to the AAD: Join us on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube and Instagram.



**AMERICAN ACADEMY of
DERMATOLOGY | ASSOCIATION**

SKIN CANCER

Whether your skin needs medical, surgical or cosmetic treatment, trust the expert care of a board-certified dermatologist.



How Do I Do a Skin Cancer Self-examination?

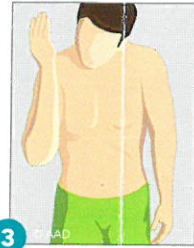
Checking your skin means taking note of all the spots on your body, from moles to freckles to age spots. Ask someone for help when checking your skin, especially in hard-to-see places. Follow these steps:



1 Examine your body front and back in a mirror, followed by the right and left sides, with your arms raised.



2 Examine the back of your neck and scalp with a hand mirror. Part your hair for a closer look at your scalp.



3 Bend your elbows; look carefully at your forearms, the back of your upper arms and your palms.



4 Check your back and buttocks with a hand mirror.



5 Finally, look at the backs of your legs and feet, the spaces between your toes, and your soles.

You should also receive a skin exam from your dermatologist. Your dermatologist will tell you how often you should have a skin exam from a doctor based on your individual risk, including your skin type, history of sun exposure and family history. It is very important that you keep every appointment for a skin exam.

How Is Skin Cancer Diagnosed?

When caught early, skin cancer is highly treatable.

Proper treatment begins with the right diagnosis. To diagnose skin cancer, a dermatologist performs a skin biopsy. This is the only way to definitively diagnose skin cancer. Your dermatologist can perform a biopsy using local anesthesia during an office visit.

To perform a biopsy, your dermatologist will remove either the entire skin growth or part of it. The removed skin will be sent to a lab where it will be examined under a microscope.

If you are diagnosed with skin cancer, your dermatologist will consider the type, size and location of the skin cancer, as well as your overall health to determine the best treatment for you.

When caught early and the entire growth is removed, further treatment may not be needed. If further treatment is needed, your dermatologist will discuss your treatment options and make recommendations.

How Can I Prevent Skin Cancer?

Exposure to ultraviolet light, from the sun and indoor tanning devices, is the most preventable risk factor for all types of skin cancers, including melanoma. The following can help you detect and prevent new skin cancers:

- **Keep all appointments with your dermatologist.** When found early, skin cancer is highly treatable.
- **Perform skin self-exams.** Examine your skin as often as your dermatologist recommends. Be sure to check your scalp, ears, palms, soles, genitals and buttocks.
- **If you notice anything changing, itching or bleeding on your skin, make an appointment to see a board-certified dermatologist.** Tell the person who schedules the appointment why you want to see your dermatologist.
- **Protect your skin every day by:**
 - **Seeking shade.** Shade helps to protect your skin from the sun's harmful UV rays. This is especially important between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. when the sun's rays are strongest. Any time your shadow is shorter than you are, seek shade.
 - **Dressing to protect yourself from the sun** by wearing a lightweight and long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses.

- **Applying sunscreen to all skin that clothing won't cover,** using a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF 30 or higher. Apply sunscreen to all exposed skin when you are going to be outside, even on a cloudy day. Reapply approximately every two hours, or after swimming or sweating.
- **Using extra caution near water, snow and sand.** These reflect and intensify the damaging rays of the sun.
- **Avoid tanning — both indoors and out.** Ultraviolet light from the sun and tanning beds can cause skin cancer and premature skin aging. If you want to look like you've been in the sun, consider using a sunless self-tanning product, but you should continue to apply sunscreen with it.

A board-certified dermatologist is a medical doctor who specializes in the diagnosis and medical, surgical and cosmetic treatment of skin, hair and nail conditions. To learn more about skin cancer or to find a board-certified dermatologist in your area, visit aad.org/skincancer or call toll-free (888) 462-DERM (3376).

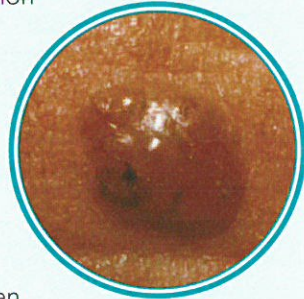
Visit the SPOT Skin Cancer™ website — SpotSkinCancer.org — to learn how to perform a skin self-exam, download a body mole map for tracking changes on your skin and find free skin cancer screenings in your area. Those affected by skin cancer can also share their story via the website and download free materials to educate others in their community.

What Are the Types of Skin Cancer?

The most common types of skin cancer include:

BASAL CELL CARCINOMA

BCC is the most common type of skin cancer. BCC appears on the skin in many shapes and sizes. You may see a dome-shaped growth with visible blood vessels; a shiny, pinkish patch; or a sore that heals and then returns. BCC frequently develops on skin that is exposed to the sun, such as the scalp, face, nose, neck and hands. BCC rarely spreads to other areas of the body, but it can grow deep into tissue and bone if left untreated.



BASAL CELL CARCINOMA

exposed to sun, such as the face, ears, lips, back of the hands, arms and legs.

SCC can also develop on areas of the body that are not exposed to sun, such as inside the mouth or on the genitals. Smoking or chewing tobacco may increase the risk of getting SCC in the mouth or throat, while HPV can also play a role in both oral and genital SCC. Left untreated, SCC can spread to other parts of the body, making treatment difficult.

MELANOMA

This is the deadliest form of skin cancer. Melanoma may suddenly appear without warning. It can also develop on normal skin, or from or near an existing mole. New, rapidly growing moles, or moles that change in shape, color or size can be a sign of melanoma. Other early signs of melanoma include moles that bleed or itch.

Melanoma can also develop on the fingernails and toenails. This will look like a brown or black streak in the nail. It may be associated with splitting, redness, pain or bleeding of the nail.

Although melanoma is more common in those with light-colored skin, people with skin of color also get melanoma.

In skin of color, melanoma usually appears on the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet, under a nail, in the mouth or on the genitals.

SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA

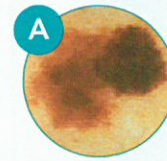
SCC is the second most common type of skin cancer. SCC appears on the skin in many shapes. You may see a crusted or rough bump; a red, rough flat patch; a dome-shaped bump that grows and bleeds; or a sore that does not heal, or heals and returns. SCC frequently develops on skin that is



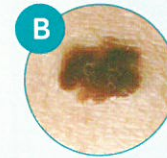
SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA

What Are the ABCDEs of Melanoma?

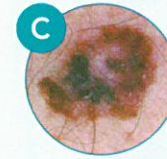
Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer, however, when detected early, it can be effectively treated. You can identify the warning signs of melanoma by looking for the following:



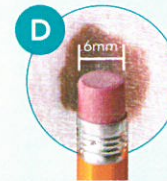
A stands for ASYMMETRY. One half does not look like the other half.



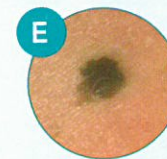
B stands for BORDER. The spot has an irregular, scalloped or poorly defined border.



C stands for COLOR. The spot is varied from one area to another, with shades of tan and brown or black, or sometimes white, red or blue.



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



E stands for EVOLVING. A mole or skin growth looks different from the rest or is changing in size, shape or color.



Make an appointment to see a board-certified dermatologist if you notice a spot or mole on your skin that has any of these characteristics:

- Fits any of the ABCDEs of melanoma.
- Differs from the other moles or spots on your skin.
- Changes, itches or bleeds, even if the spot is smaller than 6 mm.

Skin cancer can develop anywhere on the skin and is one of the few cancers you can usually see on your body.

What Are Actinic Keratoses?

Actinic keratoses are common skin growths. AKs are considered precancerous. Left untreated, an AK may turn into squamous cell carcinoma.

Most AKs are dry, scaly, rough-textured spots on the skin. AKs form on skin that receives a lot of sun exposure, such as on the head, including the ears, lips and scalp; arms; and hands. Women frequently get AKs on their lower legs. AKs can form, disappear and then return.



ACTINIC KERATOSES