

SCREENING TIPS FOR FINDING SKIN CANCER

“ Catching skin cancer early will often lead to a better prognosis for patients and can mean avoiding extensive surgeries or other treatments depending on the cancer. ”

Medically Reviewed By:
Catherine Pisano, MD



Regular monthly self-examinations of your skin

Which will allow you to track changes in your skin and alert a physician about any concerns.



A yearly annual evaluation by a dermatologist

If you have many moles (more than 50), atypical moles, a family history of melanoma, a personal history of skin cancer, are immunosuppressed, or have other risk factors.



HOW DO I PERFORM A SELF-EXAM FOR SKIN CANCER?

To conduct a self-exam, use the acronym ABCDE (asymmetry, border, color, diameter/ugly duckling, evolution) to evaluate if a mole on your body could be something more serious. If any spots seem unusual, consult your doctor as soon as possible.

- **A – Asymmetry:** When one half of the lesion is unlike the other.
- **B – Border:** When the lesion has an irregular, scalloped (a series of curves) or poorly defined border.
- **C – Color:** If the color of the lesion varies from one area to the next or has several different colors (tan, brown, black, white, red, or purple).
- **D – Diameter/Ugly Duckling:** Melanomas are usually bigger than 6mm but can be smaller if diagnosed early. If the diameter of a lesion is increasing rapidly, you should consult your doctor as soon as possible. The “ugly duckling” rule, meaning one mole on your body looks very different from all the others, is another reason to consult your doctor.
- **E – Evolving:** When the lesion changes in size, shape, and color or becomes symptomatic.

WE INVITE YOU TO VISIT THE DANA-FARBER BOOTH TO ADDRESS ANY CONCERNS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT CANCER.



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DOES MELANOMA AFFECT PEOPLE WITH DARK SKIN?



What is it?

Melanoma, a type of skin cancer, gets its name from the pigment-producing cells called melanocytes, from which tumors can develop.



Does skin color affect risk?

The short answer is yes, but everyone should know about skin cancer and get checked. Because darker-skinned people have more melanin, they have a lower risk of developing melanoma than fair-skinned people.

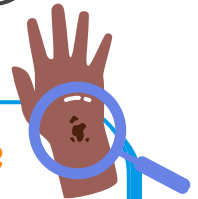


Early detection

Cancer usually starts in the skin. It may appear as a mole that has recently changed in size, shape, or color. Although melanoma is more common among white people, death rates are higher among people of color.

Detect in people of skin color

It's important to check areas of skin that are usually hidden from the sun, including the soles of your feet, between your toes, and the palms of your hands, for new or changing moles. Skin cancer can also show up on your nails as a pigmented streak.



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