

VISIBLE WARNING SIGNS

Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers, affecting more than two million Americans each year. It is also the easiest to cure, if diagnosed and treated early.

Use the A, B, C, D, E method to detect visible warning signs. If you notice any of the warning signs below, contact your physician for evaluation.

THE A, B, C, D, E METHOD

A – Asymmetry

One half of a skin lesion is unlike the other half.



B – Border irregular

The borders are irregular, ragged, blurred or notched.



C – Color

The color of the mole is varied from one area to another with differing shades of tan, brown, black, red, blue or white.



D – Diameter

The mole is larger than 6mm (the diameter of a pencil eraser).



E – Evolution

The mole has been growing or changed its shape or color.



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UNDERSTANDING SKIN CANCER



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PREVENTING SKIN CANCER

Follow these sun safety tips year-round to help prevent serious skin damage and reduce your risk of skin cancer.

- Do not use tanning beds. Excessive, unprotected UV exposure, particularly at younger ages, increases the risk of skin cancer.
- Limit sun exposure between 10AM and 2PM, when the sun is at its strongest.
- Stay in the shade when possible. Remember the shadow rule: if your shadow is shorter than you, the sun's rays are at their strongest, and you should seek shade.
- Keep very young children (6 months or younger) out of the sun. Encourage children to play in shaded areas during peak sun hours.
- Use SPF 30 or higher sunscreen for children.
- Wear protective clothing when outside, such as wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses.
- Sunglasses should offer 99 to 100 percent UV protective absorption.
- Remember UV rays bounce off sand, snow, concrete and water.
- Apply sunscreen liberally and evenly over all exposed areas.
- Use a sunscreen with an SPF 30 or higher during intense sun exposure.
- Use products providing a broad spectrum of protection against both UVB and UVA rays. Look for products containing ingredients like Avobenzone (Parsol 1789) or zinc oxide.
- Apply sunscreen before going outdoors and reapply often. Reapply after swimming, perspiring and drying off.
- Provide complete sunscreen coverage for your skin, including neck, ears and lips.
- Apply sunscreen to the scalp for people with thin or thinning hair.

RISK FACTORS

Some people may be at higher risk than others. Having one or more of the following risk factors could increase your risk of developing skin cancer.

Sun sensitivity

Sunburning easily, fair skin, light eyes, natural blond or red hair color

Sunburns at a young age

Just one sunburn with blisters doubles your chance of diagnosis.

Tanning bed use

Using a tanning bed before the age of 30 increases risk of melanoma by 75 percent.

Occupational exposures

Exposure to coal tar, pitch, creosote, arsenic compounds or radiation

Age

Melanoma is most common in men over the age of 50. It is the most common cancer in young adults.

Family history of melanoma cancer

A weak immune system for any reason

Certain types or a large number of moles

Living in the Sun Belt or at higher elevations

Previous melanoma diagnosis

Having had severe burns from the sun, tanning beds or lamps, X-rays or radiation

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Surgery is the most common treatment to skin cancer. However, if diagnosed with melanoma, treatment options such as chemotherapy, radiation or removal of the lymph nodes may be considered.

TYPES OF SKIN CANCER

• Basal cell carcinoma

The most common form of skin cancer, basal cell carcinoma, usually appears as slow growing, translucent, raised, pearly nodules – which if untreated, may crust, ulcerate and sometimes bleed. If detected and treated early, there is a greater than 95 percent cure rate.

• Squamous cell carcinoma

A common form of skin cancer, squamous cell carcinoma appears as nodules or red, scaly patches and can metastasize if untreated. While the cure rate is very high when treated early, squamous cell carcinoma can sometimes result in death.

• Melanoma (cutaneous melanoma)

A disease of the skin in which cancer (malignant) cells are found in cells that color the skin (melanocytes). It is the least common, but fastest growing and most dangerous type of skin cancer. While it usually occurs in adults, it occasionally is found in children and adolescents.

EARLY DETECTION

The key to successfully treating melanoma is to catch it early. Have yearly skin checks by your primary care physician or dermatologist and examine your own skin once a month.

SHOULD I BE TESTED?

Your doctor will check your skin and look at the size, shape, color and texture of any suspicious areas. A skin biopsy of areas of concern may be taken to examine if it is cancerous.