

Skin Cancer

Risk awareness and self-checking



The ABCDE rule helps you check for moles that:

A

Are **Asymmetric**
(the two halves
don't match)

B

Have **Borders** that
are irregular, (jagged,
scalloped or poorly
defined)

C

Have a variety of
Colours within one
mole

D

Are more than 6mm
in **Diameter** (the size
of a pencil rubber)

E

Evolving,
melanoma moles
often change

If you notice any of these skin changes, it's important to get them checked by a GP.

Skin cancer basics and next steps

Who is at higher risk for skin cancer?

Anyone can get skin cancer, however the risk is higher if you have fair skin that burns easily in the sun, red or blonde hair, blue or green eyes and a large number of freckles or moles. If you have had a lot of sun exposure and sunburn in the past, used sunbeds a lot, have a history of skin cancer in your family or you've had skin cancer before, your risk is also higher.

How is skin cancer diagnosed?

Your GP will likely do a physical examination of your skin and look at concerning moles using a special instrument called a dermatoscope. They might also take photos and take a sample of skin (a biopsy) to be sent for testing.

How can skin cancer be prevented?

Staying safe in the sun is the best way to lower your chance of getting skin cancer (both melanoma and non-melanoma). Do not use sun beds.

Checking your skin on a monthly basis, using the ABCDE rule above, will help you to notice if there are any changes to existing moles, freckles or to a previously normal patch of skin. Not smoking and maintaining a healthy weight are highly recommended for cancer prevention in general.

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When should you contact a GP?

- ✓ If you notice any of the ABCDE symptoms
- ✓ If you have a lot of sun or sunbed exposure
- ✓ If you have a family history of skin cancer
- ✓ If you feel worried – it's always better to check

30–37%

of women aged 25–55+ worry about getting skin cancer in the future

154%

the increase in skin cancer incidence rates since the early 1990s

86%

of skin cancer cases are avoidable

Sources: Cancer Research UK, Perci Health and Censuswide data

Common myths about sun/sunbed exposure and skin cancer

Myth You're only at risk for skin cancer if you have fair skin"

Fact While those with fair skin are more at risk of skin damage, anyone, regardless of skin tone, can get skin cancer.

Myth "Sunbeds are a safe alternative to sun exposure"

Fact Sunbeds can emit UV radiation up to 15 times stronger than the midday sun and are classified as a Group 1 carcinogen. Using a sunbed even once significantly increases the risk of melanoma.

Myth "You need sun exposure to make Vitamin D"

Fact While it's important to get sunlight to help our bodies make Vitamin D, it's essential to stay safe in the sun. You can also get Vitamin D from foods and supplements.

Myth "If a mole hasn't changed, it's not cancer"

Fact Skin spots, whether pre-existing or new, can develop into skin cancer. It is not always a changing mole.

Myth "Only people with a family history need to worry about skin cancer"

Fact Anyone can get skin cancer, regardless of whether a family member has been diagnosed.