



Further information



Other signs of skin cancer

- a new growth or sore that will not heal
- a spot, mole or sore that itches or hurts
- a mole or growth that bleeds, crusts or scabs.

Any change in a mole, freckle or normal patch of skin that occurs quickly, over weeks or months, should be taken seriously.

Does skin cancer spread?

Melanoma and some other skin cancers will spread to other parts of the body if left untreated. Some skin cancers spread more quickly than others. It is essential to see your doctor as soon as you notice any changes.

What will happen at the doctor's?

If your doctor has any concerns you will be referred to a hospital specialist. If your specialist thinks you might have skin cancer it will be removed in a simple operation under local anaesthetic. The skin will then be examined. If it is skin cancer you may be given treatment and invited to attend regular check-ups.

Who is most at risk?

Everyone should check their skin for changes but some people are more likely than others to develop skin cancer. People with fair skin, lots of moles or freckles, or a family history of skin cancer are most at risk.

For more about how to be SunSmart, please see our 'Be SunSmart' leaflet or visit Cancer Research UK's SunSmart website www.sunsmart.org.uk

For more about cancer visit our patient information website www.cancerhelp.org.uk

If you want to talk in confidence about cancer, call our information nurses on freephone **0808 8004040**.

Our health messages are based on scientific evidence. Find out more at www.cancerresearchuk.org/health

You can order our full range of leaflets free online at www.cancerresearchuk.org/leaflets

About Cancer Research UK

Cancer Research UK is the world's leading charity dedicated to finding out how to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer. If you would like to support our work, please call **020 7121 6699** or visit www.cancerresearchuk.org

Together we will beat cancer

Ref: ED003B. April 2009. Registered charity no 1089464.

Detecting skin cancer

spot the symptoms early





Skin cancer facts

Skin cancer is very common in the UK. Finding skin cancer early saves lives, so it is very important to know the signs.

Skin cancer often first appears as a change in a mole or a patch of normal skin. If you notice a change that happens over weeks or months you should act without delay. Most changes are not caused by cancer, but do need to be checked out by a doctor.

The most serious type of skin cancer is called malignant melanoma, also known as melanoma. Other types of skin cancer are called non-melanoma. Non-melanomas are by far the most common skin cancers.

Most of the information in this leaflet is about melanoma. When skin cancer is caught early, treatment is simpler and more effective. The leaflet also provides information about other types of skin cancer. They are much less dangerous than melanoma but still need early treatment.

What causes skin cancer?

The main cause of skin cancer is too much ultra violet radiation (UVR), from the sun or sunbeds.

Where can skin cancer start?

The most common sites for melanoma are the leg in women, the back in men and the face in older people. But a melanoma can grow anywhere, sometimes on the sole of the foot, or on the buttocks.

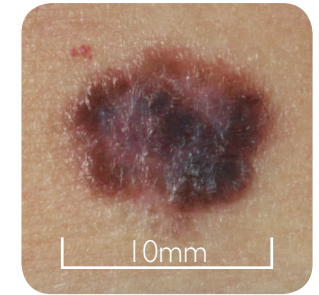
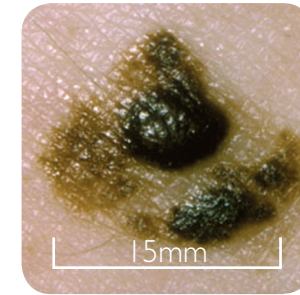
Other types of skin cancer often affect areas that catch the most sun such as the head, neck, shoulders or arms.

What are the signs of skin cancer?

You may have some moles or dark patches on your skin that are flat or slightly raised. Usually these will remain harmless all your life. Show your doctor any moles or patches of normal skin that change in size, shape or colour over weeks or months.

Check your skin regularly for changes. This is especially important if you are fair skinned with lots of moles or freckles. The ABCD rule can help you remember what to look out for. If you notice any of the ABCD signs, see your doctor without delay.

The ABCD rule

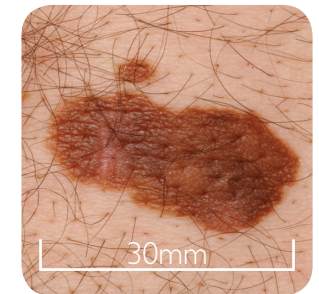
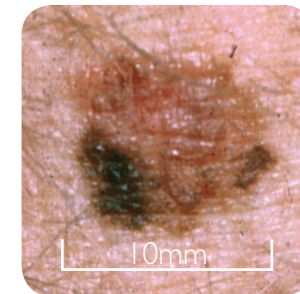


Asymmetry

The two halves of a melanoma may not look the same

Border

Edges of a melanoma may be irregular, blurred or jagged



Colour

The colour of a melanoma may be uneven, with more than one shade

Diameter

Many melanomas are at least 6mm in diameter, the size of a pencil eraser

