

SKIN CANCER - SELF EXAMINATION

Self examination of the skin aids in the recognition of any new or evolving lesions. Consult your doctor if changes are noticed.

1. Examine your body front and back in the mirror, then right and left sides, arms raised.
2. Bend the elbows and look carefully at forearms and upper arms and palms.
3. Look at the backs of the legs and feet, spaces between toes and the soles.
4. Examine the back of the neck and the scalp with a hand mirror. Part the hair for a closer look at the scalp.
5. Finally, check the back and buttocks with a hand mirror.



"Specialising in the microscopic diagnosis of skin cancer"
Pathologist: Dr Ian Katz

Level 1, Suite 6
32 Florence St
Hornsby NSW 2077
t: (02) 9482 1050
f: (02) 9482 4512
e: pathology@southernsun.com.au



PATIENT INFORMATION

www.southernsun.com.au

PATIENT INFORMATION



MELANOMA

MELANOMA is a serious form of skin cancer of melanocytes – the cells that produce dark protective pigment called melanin. Individual lesions may appear as a dark brown, black or multi-coloured growth with irregular borders that can become crusted and bleed.

Melanoma may affect anyone at any age and can occur anywhere on the body. An increased risk of developing this disease is seen in people who have fair skin, light hair and eye colour, a family history of melanoma or who have had melanoma in the past. These tumors can arise in or near a pre-existing mole or may appear without warning. Melanoma may spread to other organs, making it essential to treat this skin cancer early.

HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF?

Overexposure to sunlight, especially when it results in sunburn and blistering, is a major cause of melanoma. Thus, an important preventive measure to help reduce the risk of melanoma is sun avoidance, especially during peak sunlight hours of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Limit sun exposure to the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays by wearing sunglasses, broad-brimmed hats and protective, tightly woven clothing. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen rated SPF 30+ on all exposed skin, including the lips, even on cloudy days.

Reapply sunscreen frequently. Avoid tanning parlors and artificial tanning devices.

Inspect your entire body for any skin changes and routinely visit your doctor for a skin examination. Detecting melanoma early can be lifesaving, since this cancer may be curable in its early stages. Any irregularity in an existing or newly developed pigment skin lesion (asymmetry, uneven border, colour variability, diameter of more than 6mm, elevation or bleeding) could be a sign of melanoma and should be examined immediately by a doctor.

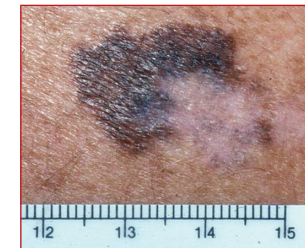
People with dark complexions can also develop melanoma, especially on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, under the nails and in the mouth. Therefore, these areas of the body should be examined closely on a regular basis.

Don't become a statistic

1 in 2 Australians will develop skin cancer at some point in life, most from exposure to UV radiation. Although melanoma accounts for only 4% of all skin cancers, it is responsible for approximately 70% of all deaths that arise from skin cancers. Melanoma develops on the skin of approximately 10,000 Australians annually, with an estimated 1,100 dying from melanoma every year.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

After sections of tissue from a biopsy of your skin are assessed under a microscope by a dermatopathologist and determined to be melanoma, your doctor will discuss several treatment options. Treatment of melanoma is designed according to several variables including location, extent of spread and aggressiveness of the tumor as well as your general health. Forms of treatment for melanoma include surgical excision, chemotherapy and radiation. Sometimes lymph nodes are removed. Your doctor will help you to better understand these treatment options.



THE ABCDE'S OF MELANOMA
When examining moles be sure to think of ABCDE.

- Asymmetry**..... One half does not match the other half
- Border Irregularity**..... The edges are notched or ragged
- Colour**..... Varied shades of tan, black and brown
- Diameter**..... Greater than 6mm actual size
- Evolving**..... Significant change in size, shape or shade of colour

healthy skin saves lives