



Melanoma

Facts

- ❖ Melanoma is a skin cancer that arises in cells called melanocytes - cells that make the brown pigment called melanin.
- ❖ According to the American Cancer Society the incidence rate for melanoma (number of new cases per 100,000 people each year) has more than doubled since 1973.
- ❖ Melanoma appears as a pre-existing mole that changes, or as a new mole on previously unaffected/clear skin.
- ❖ Risk factors include multiple irregular or large moles, exposure to UV light, having dysplastic nevi (atypical moles), family history, and immune system suppression.
- ❖ Those with fair skin and light eye colour are at greatest risk. However Blacks and those with African American heritage are also at risk.
- ❖ Short periods of intense exposure, such as sunbathing are associated with a two fold increase in melanoma risk.
- ❖ Melanoma is the rarest form of skin cancer but the most lethal. Basal cell cancer and squamous cell cancer account for most skin cancers diagnosed.
- ❖ While Melanoma accounts for only 4% of skin cancers it accounts for nearly 80% of skin cancer deaths. The number of deaths has remained stable over the last 10 years due to earlier diagnosis and improved surgical techniques.
- ❖ Melanoma is the sixth most common cancer in men and the seventh most common in women. However, it is the **second** most common cancer in women between the ages of 20 and 35, and the leading cause of cancer death in this age group.
- ❖ The five year survival rate for people whose melanoma is detected and treated before it spreads is 99 percent.

Get to know your skin so that you may be alert to changes.
See reverse side for guide to self skin check.

Self-Examination for Melanoma

Examining your skin regularly for any suspicious mole is the best way to detect skin cancer when it is still amenable to cure by simple excision.

Here is how to conduct self-examination for melanoma:

- You will need a full-length mirror and a hand mirror in a well-lighted room
- You may require the assistance of a friend or relative to conduct the exam



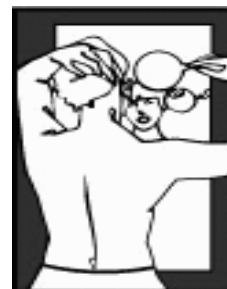
1. Examine your body front and back in the mirror, then right and left sides with arms raised.

2. Bend elbow and look carefully at forearms, upper underarm and palms.



3. Look at the backs of your legs and feet, the spaces between your toes and on the soles of your feet.

4. Examine the back of your neck and scalp with a hand mirror, and part your hair for a closer look.



5. Finally, check your back and buttocks with a hand mirror.

Always report any findings/concerns to your doctor.

IF YOU CAN SPOT IT ... YOU CAN STOP IT!

Source: <http://www.melanomacenter.org/basics/statistics.html>