



Skin Cancer: Treatable Beatable with Early Detection

Is getting a skin cancer screening important?

Yes! The most common types of skin cancer, basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), can be cured if caught early and properly treated. When melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, is detected before it spreads, it also has a high cure rate. Dermatologists offer free skin cancer screenings because these screenings can help find skin cancers early when they are most treatable and beatable.

If something suspicious is found during your skin cancer screening, you should immediately make an appointment to see a dermatologist for a follow-up examination.

Am I at risk of getting melanoma?

These risk factors significantly increase your risk of getting melanoma:

- **Sun exposure:** Have you spent a lot of time outdoors without protecting yourself from the sun? Have you had sunburns?
- **Light skin:** Do you have fair skin? Although melanoma is more common in people who have light skin, people with skin of color also get melanoma.
- **Family history:** Has any of your first-degree relatives (parent, sibling, or child) had melanoma?
- **Moles:** Do you have more than 50 moles? Has a dermatologist told you that you have atypical moles?
- **Previous melanoma:** Have you had melanoma? This greatly increases your risk of getting another melanoma.

How can I prevent skin cancer?

Sun exposure is the most preventable risk factor for all skin cancers. Here is what you can do:

- **Generously apply a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen** with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or more to all exposed skin. "Broad-spectrum" provides protection from both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays. Reapply approximately every two hours, even on cloudy days, and after swimming or sweating.
- **Wear protective clothing**, such as a long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses, where possible.
- **Seek shade** when appropriate. Remember that the sun's rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. If your shadow appears to be shorter than you are, seek shade.
- **Use extra caution near water, snow, and sand** because they reflect and intensify the damaging rays of the sun, which can increase your chances of sunburn.

- **Get vitamin D safely** through a healthy diet that may include vitamin supplements. Don't seek the sun.
- **Avoid tanning beds.** Ultraviolet light from the sun and tanning beds can cause skin cancer and wrinkling. If you want to look tan, consider using a self-tanning product or spray, but continue to use sunscreen with it.

I have skin of color, so what should I know about skin cancer?

Skin cancer can have some different warning signs in skin of color. When you examine your skin for signs of skin cancer, you should definitely look for new moles and changes to your moles and other spots on your skin.

If you have skin of color, you also should look closely at your body for these signs of skin cancer:

- **Nails:** A dark streak under a nail, a band of color around a nail, nail looks infected
- **Hands and feet:** A brown, black, or tan spot
- **Mouth and nose:** A growing mass inside one of these areas, also might have nosebleeds or nasal stuffiness
- **Bruises:** A bruise on skin that you did not injure, a bruise that won't heal, or a bruise that heals and returns
- **Scars:** New scar on skin you did not injure or changes to existing scar

Checking your skin for these signs can help you find skin cancer early. Too often, people who have skin of color mistakenly believe that they cannot get skin cancer. By the time they seek medical care, they often have late-stage skin cancer. Melanoma can be deadly in the late stages. In the early stages, most skin cancers, including melanoma, are treatable and beatable.

If you see a new spot or notice something changing on your skin, immediately make an appointment to see a dermatologist.

Do you have a story to tell?

If you or a loved one has had skin cancer, tell us your skin cancer story at SpotSkinCancer.org.



Where can I find a dermatologist or a free screening?

SpotSkinCancer.org
1-888-462-DERM