

THE PROACTIVE

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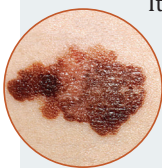
Melanoma

June 2018

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

5 Signs of Skin Cancer

It is very important to know your skin, and to observe any new spots, growths, or moles that appear. The first signs of melanoma can appear in one or more atypical moles. You can evaluate these atypical moles and/or spots by using the ABCDE Method.¹



ABCDE Method.¹

Asymmetry:



If you draw a line through the middle of a benign mole, the two sides will match, meaning it is symmetrical. If the two sides do not match, if the mole is **asymmetrical**, this can be a warning sign for melanoma.

Border:



A benign mole has smooth, even **borders**, unlike melanomas. The **borders** of an early melanoma tend to be uneven and the edges may be scalloped or notched.

Color:



Most benign moles are all one **color**, often a single shade of brown. Having a variety of colors is a warning signal. A number of different shades of brown, tan, or black could appear. A melanoma may also become red, white, or blue.

Diameter:



Benign moles usually have a smaller **diameter** than malignant ones. Melanomas usually are larger in **diameter** than an eraser on a pencil (1/4 inch or 6mm), but they may sometimes be smaller when first detected.

Evolving:



Common, benign moles look the same over time. Be on the alert when a mole starts to **evolve** or change in any way. When a mole is **evolving**, see a doctor. Any change—in size, shape, color, elevation, or another trait, or any new symptom such as bleeding, itching, or crusting—points to danger.



Melanoma:

Signs and Symptoms, Prevention, and Treatment

It is finally here! Summer. Many declare it to be the best time of the year. Those warm months full of swimming, hiking, road trips, beach days, boating, barbecues, and outdoor play have an unfortunate dark side to them: sunburn.

Sunburn is a very serious matter. Overexposure to the sun's harmful UV rays is not only rather unpleasant for the short-term, but may cause dark spots on the skin, increased aging of the skin, wrinkles, or much worse: skin cancer.

Cancer of the skin is by far the most common of all cancers. Melanoma, a type of skin cancer, accounts for only 1% of all skin cancers, but causes the majority of skin cancer deaths. The American Cancer Society estimates 91,270 new melanomas will be diagnosed in 2018.

Melanoma is a form of skin cancer that starts in a certain type of cell called the *melanocytes*. Melanoma can develop anywhere on the skin, but is most commonly found on the chest and back in men, and on the legs in women. An individual's face and neck are also common sites of the cancer.

1. Skin Cancer Foundation. Do You Know Your ABCDEs? www.skincancer.org.
2. The Skin Cancer Foundation. Melanoma Prevention Guidelines. www.skincancer.org.

Prevention and Treatment

Prevention

The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends several skin cancer prevention tips.²

- Seek the shade between the hours of 10:00am and 4:00pm.
- Do not allow yourself to sunburn.
- Avoid tanning and never use UV tanning beds.
- When outside, cover up with clothing in addition to applying sunscreen.
- Always choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen, which provides protection from both UVA (skin aging) and UVB (cancer causing) rays.
- Reapply sunscreen at least every 2 hours.
- Examine your skin, head to toe, every month.
- See your physician yearly for a professional skin exam.

Treatment

Melanoma can be cured if it's found and treated early. If it spreads, it is much more difficult to treat. The necessary treatment is dependent upon the stage of cancer. Possible treatment procedures include:

- Surgery — the entire melanoma is cut out, along with surrounding normal skin.
- Chemotherapy — uses medicines to stop or slow the growth of cancer cells.
- Immunotherapy — uses medicines to help your immune system fight the cancer.