

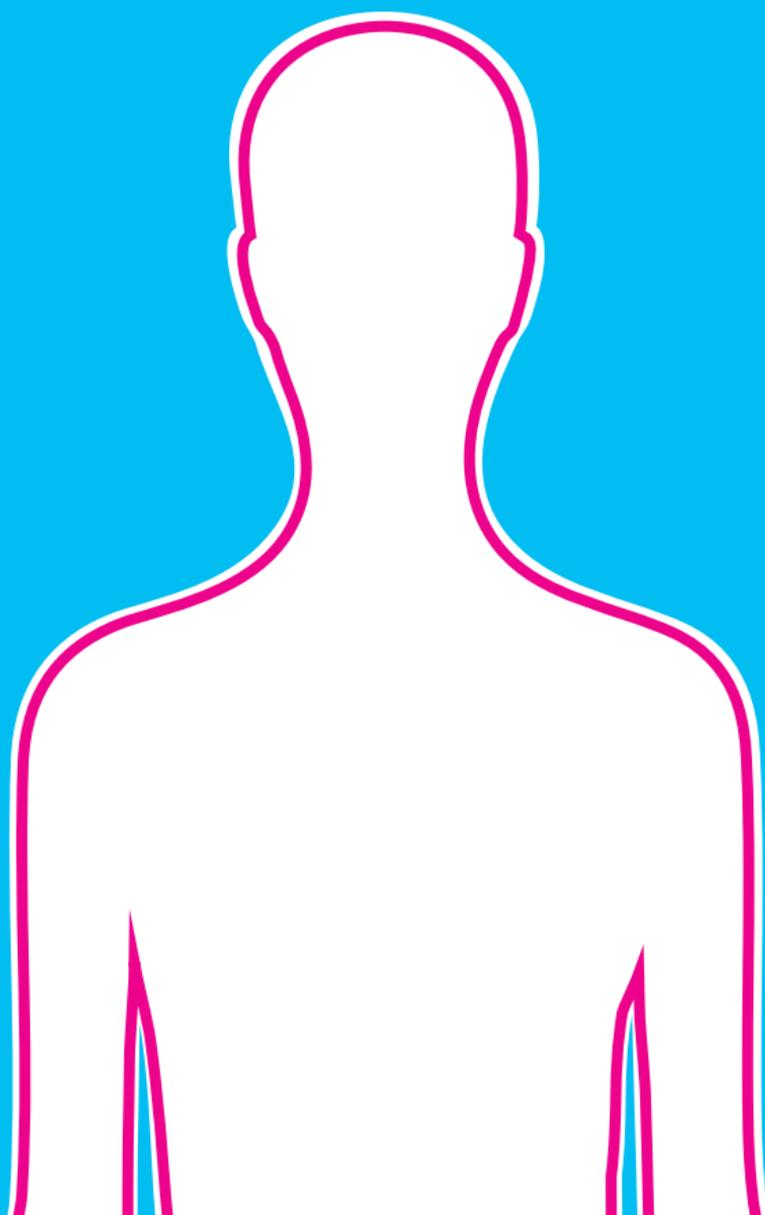
SKIN CANCER

How to spot the signs and symptoms

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CANCER
RESEARCH
UK



Around 37 people are diagnosed with malignant melanoma, the most serious type of skin cancer, every day in the UK. The main cause of skin cancer is too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or sunbeds.

Finding skin cancer early saves lives, so it's important to know what's normal for your skin and tell your doctor about any changes that are unusual or don't go away. Most changes are not caused by cancer, but it's important to get them checked out by a doctor.

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In this leaflet you can find out about:

- what affects your risk of skin cancer
- the signs and symptoms to look out for.

There are two main types of skin cancer

Most of this leaflet is about malignant melanoma (also known as just 'melanoma'), the most serious type of skin cancer. The leaflet also covers non-melanoma skin cancer - it's much more common though usually much less serious, but it still needs treatment.

Does skin cancer spread?

Skin cancer can start anywhere, even in places that are rarely exposed to the sun. Melanoma can spread inside your body. Other types of skin cancer may also spread but this is much less common.

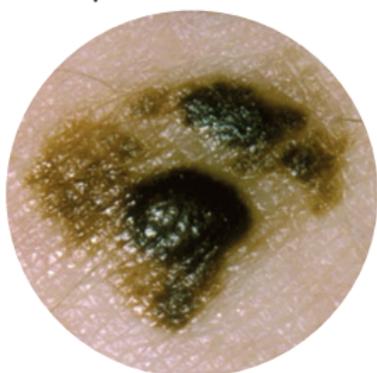
Getting skin cancer diagnosed and treated early can make a real difference. So it is important to get any skin changes checked out by a doctor.

What should I look out for?

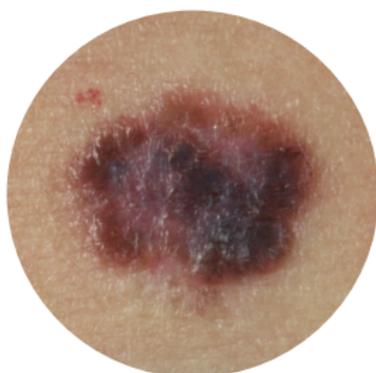
Get to know what your skin normally looks like. You may have some moles or dark patches that are flat or slightly raised. Usually these will stay harmless all your life.

Show your doctor if you notice any changes in how your skin looks or feels, or if you have moles and notice one that looks different to the others. And make sure you go back if something you've shown your doctor before keeps changing.

Skin cancer may appear as a new mole or mark or it can be a change to something you've had for a while. The ABCD rule can help you remember some of the different things to look out for. These images are just examples:



Asymmetry - the two halves may not match.



Border - may be irregular, blurred or jagged.



Colour - may be uneven, with more than one shade.



Diameter - may be at least 6mm wide, the width of a pencil.

Also show your doctor if you notice:

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

Any of these signs can happen with or without any of the ABCD changes.

What affects the risk?

- **Age**

Like most cancers, the risk of developing skin cancer increases as you get older. But it is also unusual because more than a third of all cases of melanoma in the UK are found in people aged under 55.

- **Personal or family history**

Your risk is higher if you or a close family member have had skin cancer. Or if you have had some other types of cancer.

- **Skin type and colour**

People who who have lots of moles or freckles, sunburn easily or have fair skin, or red or fair hair, or light-coloured eyes have a higher risk. It is less common, but people with naturally brown or black skin can also develop skin cancer.

- **Too much sun**

Getting sunburnt increases the risk in adults and children. Protect skin from too much sun with shade, clothes and sunscreen with at least SPF15 and 4 stars.

- **Jobs**

The risk is higher if you have, or have had, an outdoor job - such as farm or building work or any other job that means you are outside a lot in the daytime.

Further information

You can find out more about cancer at www.cruk.org/about-cancer

Find out more about our health messages at www.cruk.org/health

For more about the signs and symptoms of cancer visit www.spotcancerearly.com

If you want to talk in confidence about cancer, call our information nurses on freephone **0808 800 4040**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

All our leaflets are thoroughly researched and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence. They are reviewed by independent experts and updated regularly. You can order our full range of leaflets free online at www.cruk.org/leaflets

About Cancer Research UK

We pioneer life-saving research to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured. From our volunteers and supporters to our scientists, doctors and nurses, we're all here to save more lives and prevent, control and cure all cancers.

Together we will beat cancer sooner. If you would like to support our work, call **0300 123 1861** or visit our website www.cruk.org

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