

THE ABC'S OF MELANOMA

SKIN CANCER IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMONLY OCCURRING CANCERS AND MELANOMA IS THE MOST SERIOUS FORM OF THIS DISEASE. SINCE IT IS MOST LIKELY CURABLE WHEN DETECTED EARLY, REGULAR SELF-EXAMINATION IS VERY IMPORTANT.

This guide is designed to give you a better understanding of what to look for when checking for melanoma. It's a good idea for you to perform self-examination about once a month. Below you'll see how the American Cancer Society describes a number of signs and symptoms that can help you identify moles that should be seen by your physician.

It is important to monitor the size, shape, border and colour of the moles on your body. The dots that indicate mole sizes, ranging from 3 mm to 9 mm in size, can help you focus on any individual mole, so you can track its growth over a period of several examinations.

In addition, it is important to tell your doctor about any changes in skin lesions, or growths that look different from the rest of your moles. Keep in mind that most people have moles and almost all moles are harmless. However, if you find one that exhibits any of the characteristics you've read about, have your skin checked by a doctor.

REFERENCES:

1. American Cancer Society. Melanoma Skin Cancer. <http://www.cancer.org/acs/groups/cid/documents/webcontent/003120-pdf.pdf>. Accessed 07.11.12
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3. American Academy of Dermatology. How to examine your skin. <http://www.aad.org/spot-skin-cancer/understanding-skin-cancer/how-do-i-check-my-skin/how-to-perform-a-self-exam>. Accessed 07.11.12

TICK THE MONTH BELOW TO KEEP TRACK OF YOUR SELF-EXAMINATIONS

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
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WHAT TO LOOK FOR EVERY MONTH

MOLE SIZE



EXAMINE BODY FRONT AND BACK IN MIRROR, THEN RIGHT AND LEFT SIDES, ARMS RAISED.



A ASYMMETRY

ONE HALF OF THE MOLE DOES NOT MATCH THE OTHER HALF.



BEND ELBOWS, LOOK CAREFULLY AT FOREARMS, BACK OF UPPER ARMS AND PALMS.



B BORDER

THE BORDERS OF THE MOLE ARE IRREGULAR, RAGGED, BLURRED, OR NOTCHED.



NEXT, LOOK AT BACKS OF LEGS AND FEET, SPACES BETWEEN TOES, AND SOLES.



C COLOUR

THE COLOUR OF THE MOLS IS NOT THE SAME THROUGHOUT. THERE MAY BE DIFFERENT SHADES OF TAN, BROWN, BLACK, RED, BLUE OR WHITE.



EXAMINE BACK OF NECK AND SCALP WITH A HAND MIRROR. PART HAIR TO LIFT.



D DIAMETER

THE MOLE IS LARGER THAN 6 MILLIMETRES, ROUGHLY THE SIZE OF A PENCIL ERASER, BUT CAN SOMETIMES BE SMALLER.



FINALLY, CHECK BACK AND BUTTOCKS WITH A HAND MIRROR.



E EVOLUTION

THE MOLES HAS BEEN GROWING OR CHANGED ITS SHAPE OR COLOUR.

