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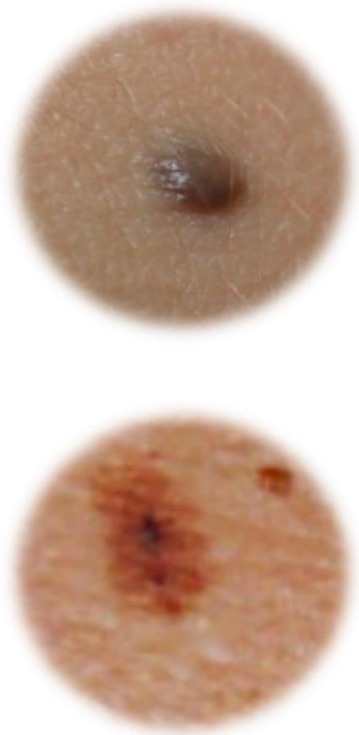
DOCTORS

M E L B O U R N E

SPOTS AND MOLES

Understanding your spots

Moles



A mole is a common benign skin lesion.

A mole can be present at birth (congenital naevus) or appear later (acquired naevus). There are various kinds of congenital and acquired naevi (American spelling 'nevi').

They may arise on any part of the body.

Moles differ in appearance depending on the body site of origin.

They may be flat or protruding.

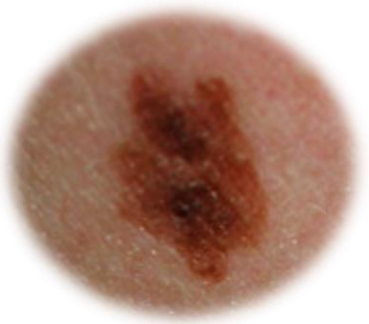
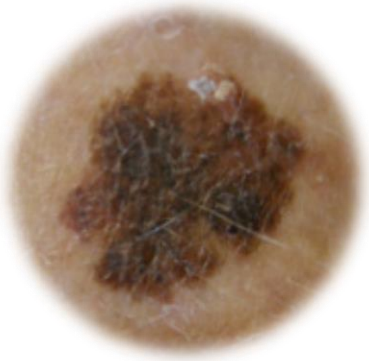
They vary in colour from pink or flesh tones to dark brown, steel blue, or black.

Light skinned individuals tend to have light-coloured moles and dark-skinned individuals tend to have dark brown or black moles.

Although mostly round or oval in shape, moles are sometimes unusual shapes.

They range in size from a couple of millimetres to several centimetres in diameter.

Atypical Moles



An atypical melanocytic naevus is a mole with unusual features.

One definition of an atypical naevus is a mole with at least 3 of the following features.

- Size > 5 mm diameter
- Ill-defined or blurred borders
- Irregular margin resulting in an unusual shape
- Varying shades of colour (mostly pink, tan, brown, black)
- Flat and bumpy components.

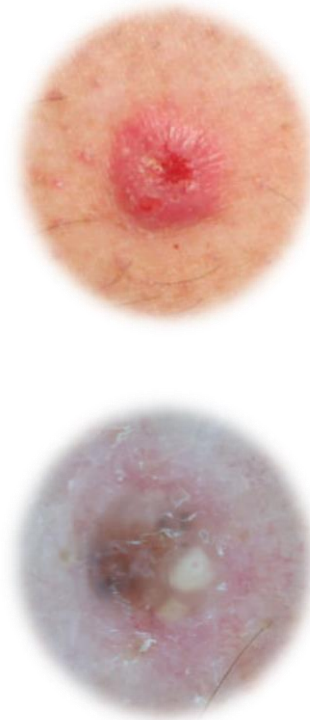
People with a large number of atypical moles may be at increased risk of melanoma.

Squamous and Basal Cell Carcinoma

SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA

Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) is a non-melanoma skin cancer.

- They grow over weeks to months
- They may ulcerate
- They are often tender or painful
- Located on sun-exposed sites, particularly the face, lips, ears, hands, forearms and lower legs
- Size varies from a few millimetres to several centimetres in diameter.



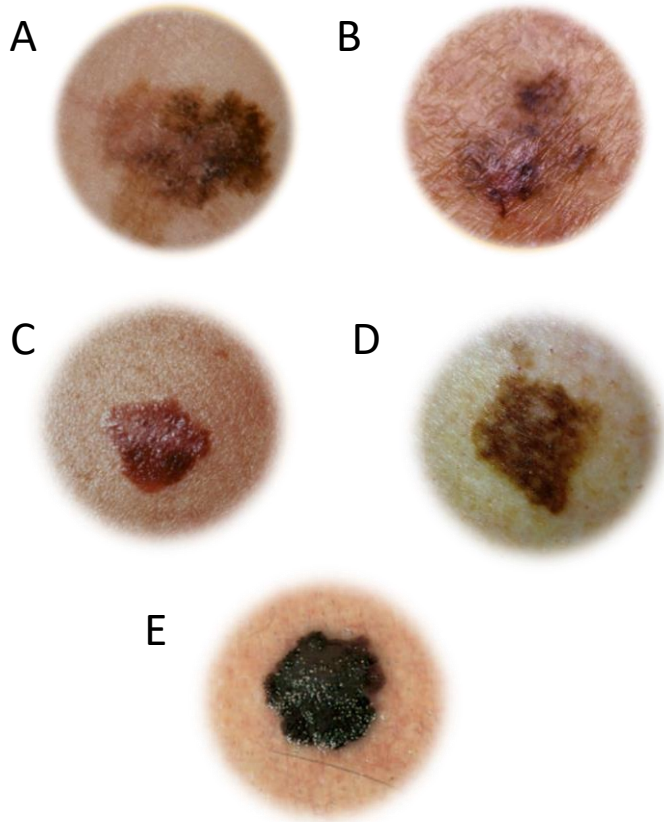
BASAL CELL CARCINOMA

Basal cell carcinoma (BCC) is the most common form of skin cancer.

- They are slow growing plaque or nodule
- Skin coloured, pink or pigmented
- Varies in size from a few millimetres to several centimetres in diameter
- Spontaneous bleeding or ulceration

BCC is very rarely a threat to life.

Melanoma



The first five letters of the alphabet are a guide to help you recognize the warning signs of melanoma.

A is for Asymmetry

B is for Border. Borders tend to be uneven and may have scalloped or notched edges, while common moles tend to have smoother, more even borders.

C is for Colour. Multiple colours are a warning sign.

D is for Diameter or Dark. Rare, amelanotic melanomas are colourless.

E is for Evolving. Any change in size, shape, colour or elevation of a spot on your skin, or any new symptom in it, such as bleeding, itching or crusting, may be a warning sign of melanoma.

If you notice these warning signs, or anything **CHANGE** or **UNUSUAL** on your skin, book an appointment with your doctor promptly.



When should I visit my doctor?

Two out of three Australians will get skin cancer in their lifetime. Most skin cancers are the non-melanoma type and are relatively easy to treat. Melanoma on the other hand, makes up a much smaller portion of skin cancer, but these are very dangerous and can be difficult to treat, if not caught early.

Get familiar with your body, early detection is key to successful outcomes for both melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer. So, it is a good idea to regularly check your own skin and ask your doctor about anything that you believe has changed for doesn't seem right.



Check Your Own Skin

GUIDE TO CHECKING YOUR OWN SKIN

Check yourself regularly from head to toe. Check all areas of the skin, including back, scalp, between the buttocks, and the genital area.

Follow the steps on the following 5 slides. You will need both a big and small hand-held mirror.

Where possible enlist the help of a friend or family member to examine the areas that are difficult to see yourself, such as earlobes and the back of the head.

Do this regularly. Get a friend or family member to check your back, or use a large hand held mirror.

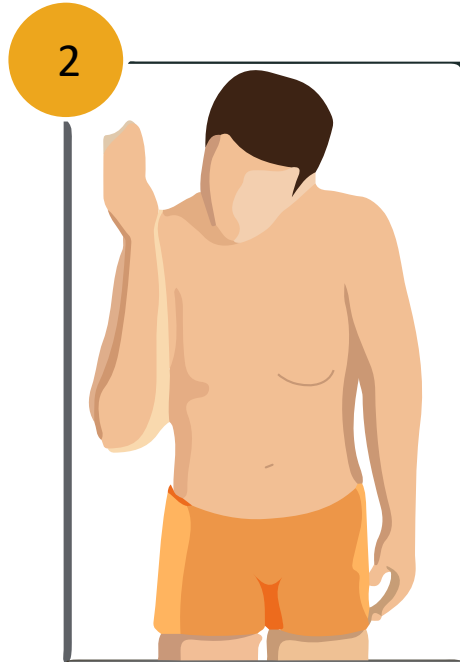
Look out for: New spots, changes in spots, dry or flaky patch that is present for more than one month, a sore that doesn't heal after 3-4 weeks, a spot that 'just doesn't seem right', and a dark patch or spot under a fingernail or toenail.

Make note of any spots you want to discuss with your doctor.



Standing in front of a full length mirror, examine your full body. Focus on the neck, chest and torso. Lift the breasts to view the undersides.

Scan your buttocks, between the cheeks, and backs of both legs.



Check your hands, palms and backs, between the fingers and under the fingernails. Continue up the wrists to examine both the front and back of your forearms.

Standing in front of the full-length mirror, begin at the elbows and scan all sides of your upper arms. Don't forget the underarms.

3



Sit down; prop each leg in turn on the other chair or rest one leg on top of the other, as shown in this image.

Check the front and sides of both legs, thigh to shin. Then, finish with ankles and feet, including soles, toes and nails (without polish).

Use the hand mirror to examine the upper thigh and genitals.

4

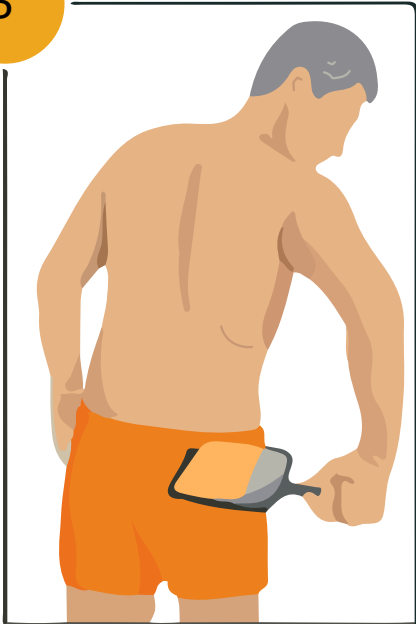


Make sure to examine your head and face. Especially your nose, lips and mouth.

Pay attention to ears and scalp, they are often overlooked.

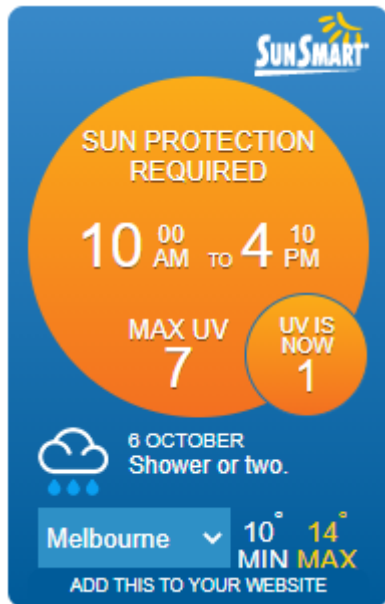
Have a family member or friend assist you with those hard to reach places or use a large hand held mirror, as shown in this image.

5



With your back to the full-length mirror, use the hand mirror to inspect the back of your neck, shoulders, upper and lower back and any part of the back of your upper arms you could not view in step 2.

Be aware of UV levels



Damage to your skin happens from too much ultra violet radiation (UV) from the sun.

UV damage is cumulative over time - that is, every time you get exposed to UV it adds up. That's why we see more skin cancers as you get older.

UV can still be high when the sky is overcast and the weather doesn't need to be hot. It's a good idea to get hold of the SunSmart app and refer to it every day to get an idea when and if you will need to be careful outside.

Get in the habit of wearing sunscreen on exposed skin whenever you go outside.

Helpful Links

Skin Cancer Foundation

<https://www.skincancer.org/early-detection/self-exams/>

Cancer Council

https://www.cancer.org.au/about-cancer/types-of-cancer/skin-cancer.html#jump_6

Melanoma Institute Australia

<https://www.melanoma.org.au/understanding-melanoma/melanoma-facts-and-statistics/>



Book your next
Appointment

<https://www.cbddoctorsmelbourne.com.au/>