

Living with Melanoma Skin Cancer

A Quick Guide

Contents

This is a brief summary of 'Living with melanoma skin cancer' from our website. You will find more detailed information on there. In this information there are sections on

- Coping with melanoma
- Caring for your skin after melanoma
- What to ask your doctor
- Melanoma organisations

You can view this information in a larger print on our website.

Coping with melanoma

Any diagnosis of cancer is difficult to cope with, both practically and emotionally. Most melanomas in the UK are diagnosed when they are at a very early stage and the chance of cure is very high. Many people just have the melanoma removed and need no further treatment. But it can still be a very worrying time. At first, you are likely to feel very upset, frightened and confused. Or you may feel that things are out of your control.

As well as coping with the fear and anxiety that a diagnosis of cancer brings, you also have to work out how to manage practically. You may need time off work while you are treated. And there may be money worries. Who do you tell that you have cancer? And how do you find the words? There may be children to consider.

The coping with cancer section contains lots of information you may find helpful. There are sections on

- Your feelings
- Talking to people about melanoma
- Helping yourself
- Getting outside help
- Sex and sexuality
- Financial matters

Caring for your skin after melanoma

A diagnosis of melanoma means you are at a higher than average risk of having another primary melanoma in the future. You must take care in the sun. The area where the melanoma was should not be exposed to strong sun at all. You should:

- Wear close weave cotton clothing in the sun
- Wear long sleeves and long trousers
- Wear a brimmed hat to protect your face and neck
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes
- Use a high factor sun cream when you are in the sun
- Stay out of the sun altogether between 11am and 3pm
- NEVER use a sun bed

What to ask your doctor about living with melanoma

- How will my treatment affect me long term?
- What changes should I make to my life style?
- Can I go back to work / take up my usual hobbies and activities again?
- Can I still go abroad on holiday?
- How should I protect my skin in the sun?
- Should other people in my family take extra care in the sun now that I've had a melanoma?
- Can anyone help me cope with my anxiety about the melanoma coming back?
- Could I see a specialist nurse?
- Is there any practical help available?
- Where can I get help dealing with my feelings?
- Can anyone help me to plan how I will talk to my family about the melanoma?
- Can I have counselling?
- Do I have to pay for counselling?
- Is there anyone who can help me with money matters, including claiming benefits?

Melanoma organisations

Cancer Research UK

Website: <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer>

Cancer Information Nurses phone: 0808 800 4040

Melanoma UK

Phone: 0808 171 2455

Website: www.melanomauk.org.uk

This organisation offers support to people affected by melanoma. They have a free phone line which is available 24 hours a day, and is run by volunteers who have personal experience of melanoma.

Melanoma Genetics Consortium

Website: www.genomel.org

Phone: 0113 206 6527

A website with information about the research consortium with interactive materials about melanoma for medical professionals, melanoma patients and their families, and the general public.

For more information, visit our website <http://www.cruk.org/about-cancer>

You will find a wide range of detailed, up to date information for people affected by cancer, including a clinical trials database that you can search for trials in the UK. Our information is based on the best current scientific evidence and reviewed regularly by leading clinicians and experts in health and social care.

For answers to your questions about cancer call our Cancer Information Nurses on 0808 800 4040 9am till 5pm Monday to Friday.

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