



CANCER
RESEARCH
UK

KNOW YOUR BODY SPOT CANCER EARLY

SKIN
CANCER



TAKE CHARGE

Whether you've heard about it from a friend or family member, seen it in the news, or are just curious: if you want to know more about spotting melanoma skin cancer, this leaflet is for you.

You'll find what to look out for, tips for telling your doctor if something's not quite right, and why we don't recommend regularly checking yourself.

When it comes to your health, remember you're in charge.

If you do spot something unusual, tell your doctor. In most cases it won't be cancer – but if it is, finding it early can make a real difference.



KNOW YOUR BODY

There's no need to do regular skin checks, just get to know what your skin normally looks and feels like. **It's not just about moles** - see your doctor if you notice any change in a patch of skin or a nail, whether it's a mark or mole you've had for a while, or something new that appears.

Talk to your doctor if you notice any of these:

- new growth or sore that won't heal
- spot, mole or sore that itches or hurts
- mole or growth that bleeds, oozes, crusts or scabs
- any other changes that aren't normal for you

The ABCDE rule is a handy way to remember mole changes to look out for. Your doctor needs to know if you've noticed even one of them.

-  **A** **ASYMMETRY**
The two halves don't match
-  **B** **BORDER**
Might be irregular, blurred or jagged
-  **C** **COLOUR**
May be uneven with different colours
-  **D** **DIAMETER**
Might be the width of a pencil (6mm)
-  **E** **EVOLVING**
Anything that changes over time

CUT YOUR RISK

We all need a bit of sun. But too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun (or sunbeds) is the main cause of skin cancer, and getting sunburnt increases your risk. When the sun is strong:



Remember to enjoy the cool of the shade – take a break under umbrellas or canopies, or just head indoors



Wear a hat, t-shirt and sunglasses



On the parts you can't cover up, use sunscreen with at least SPF15 and 4 or 5 stars

We also recommend that you avoid apps and mole maps. While these claim to help people pick up skin changes, there's not enough evidence to show that they do more good than harm, like leading to unnecessary tests and worry.

WHAT ELSE AFFECTS YOUR RISK?

- **Age:** The risk of melanoma increases as you get older.
- **Skin type:** If you have fair skin, lots of moles or freckles or skin that burns easily you're at higher risk. People with darker skin tones can get melanoma too - it might affect different places like the palms of the hands or soles of the feet.
- **Family history:** People with a family member who has been affected by melanoma are at higher risk.

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

When you're worried about your health, telling a doctor can feel tough. Here are our tips for getting the most out of your appointment:



Be as stubborn as your symptom. Don't worry you're wasting your doctor's time. If your symptoms haven't gone away, make another appointment. Your doctor will want to know.



Be thorough. Don't dismiss changes as 'part of getting older' or assume they are down to another health condition you might have – mention them to your doctor.



Be open. Tell your doctor anything that's not normal for you, even if it doesn't seem that important.



Be prepared. Have a think about how to describe the changes, and roughly how long you've had them for.

EARLY DIAGNOSIS SAVES LIVES

What if it is skin cancer? Remember, when it's spotted early, treatment is more likely to be successful. Thanks to research, treatments are kinder and more effective than ever.

WE'RE ONLINE...



Learn more about spotting cancer early, including information about screening across the UK, at cruk.org/spotcancerearly

...AND ON THE PHONE



Our Nurse Helpline is there if you're looking for any information or support. Just call **0808 800 4040**.

To provide feedback on this leaflet or find out more about the sources used to create it, call **020 3469 8333** or email publications@cancer.org.uk

And if you have any questions about Cancer Research UK or would like to support us call **0300 123 1022**.



LET'S BEAT CANCER **SOONER**

