

BASAL CELL CARCINOMA

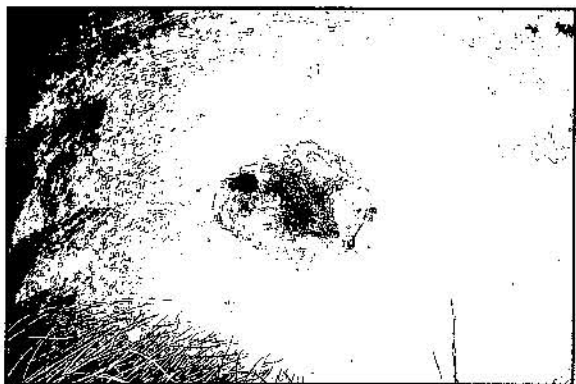


HOW CAN WE PROTECT OURSELVES?

BASAL CELL CARCINOMA is the most common form of skin cancer. It occurs most frequently on sun-exposed regions of the body. Although this skin cancer rarely spreads (metastasizes) to other organs of the body, it can cause destruction of surrounding tissue. Thus early detection and treatment are needed.

Most basal cell carcinomas are caused by chronic sun exposure, especially in people with fair skin, light hair and blue, green or grey eyes. In a few instances, there are other contributing factors such as burns, exposure to radiation, arsenical intoxication or chronic dermatitis.

Basal cell carcinoma may have several different appearances on your skin. Some warning signs that may indicate basal cell carcinoma are an open sore, a reddish patch, a growth with an elevated border and a central indentation, a bump or nodule and a scar-like area.



Because chronic overexposure to sunlight is the leading cause of basal cell carcinoma, sun avoidance, especially during peak sunlight hours of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., is an important preventive measure to help reduce the risk of developing this skin cancer.

Limit skin exposure to the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays by wearing sunglasses, broad-brimmed hats and protective, tightly woven clothing. Furthermore, use a broad-spectrum sunscreen, rated SPF-15 or higher, on all exposed skin, including the lips, even on cloudy days. Reapply sunscreen frequently. Additionally, avoid tanning parlors and artificial tanning devices.

Inspect your entire body regularly for any skin changes, especially those already mentioned, and **routinely visit your** physician for a skin examination.

THE TREATMENT OPTIONS

After sections of tissue from a biopsy of your skin are assessed under a microscope by a dermatopathologist and determined to be basal cell carcinoma, your physician will discuss several treatment options. Your physician's choice of therapy depends on the size, location and subtype of basal cell carcinoma. Your age and general health are also taken into consideration. The more common treatment options include excisional surgery, electrosurgery, radiation therapy and Mohs Micrographic Surgery. Your physician will discuss these treatment options with you.

DON'T BECOME A STATISTIC

Not only is basal cell carcinoma the most common form of skin cancer, it is the most common of all cancers, affecting over 1,000,000 Americans each year. Men are affected more often than women. Basal cell carcinomas generally tend to occur in older individuals, although they may occur in young adults and even children. People with one basal cell carcinoma have a greater chance of developing others, thus confirming the importance of regular follow-up visits to a physician.

Source: 2008 American Cancer Society