

MALIGNANT MELANOMA



HOW CAN WE PROTECT OURSELVES?



THE TREATMENT OPTIONS

MELANOMA is a serious form of skin cancer of melanocytes, the cells that produce dark protective pigment called melanin. Individual lesions may appear as a dark brown, black or multi-colored growth with irregular borders that can become crusted and bleed.

Melanoma may affect anyone at any age and can occur anywhere on the body. An increased risk of developing this disease is seen in people who have fair skin, light hair and eye color, a family history of melanoma or who have had melanoma in the past. These tumors can arise in or near a preexisting mole or may appear without warning. Melanoma may spread to other organs, making it essential to treat this skin cancer early.

The ABCDEs of Melanoma:

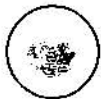
A



Asymmetry

One half does not match the other half

B



Border Irregularity

The edges are notched or ragged

C



Color

Varied shades of tan, black and brown

D



Diameter

Greater than 6 millimeters
6mm actual size—●

E

Evolving

Significant change in size, shape, or shade of color

Overexposure to sunlight, especially when it results in sunburn and blistering, is a major cause of melanoma. Thus, an important preventive measure to help reduce the risk of melanoma is sun avoidance, especially during peak sunlight hours of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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 for any skin changes and **routinely visit your dermatologist** for a skin examination. Detecting melanoma early can be lifesaving, since this cancer may be curable in its early stages. Any irregularity in an existing or newly developed pigment skin lesion (asymmetry, uneven border, color variability, diameter of more than 6mm, elevation or bleeding) could be a sign of melanoma and should be examined immediately by a dermatologist.

People with dark complexions can also develop melanoma, especially on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, under nails and in the mouth. Therefore, these areas of the body should be examined closely on a regular basis.

After sections of tissue from a biopsy of your skin are assessed under a microscope by a dermatopathologist and determined to be melanoma, your dermatologist will discuss several treatment options. Treatment of melanoma is designed according to several variables including location, extent of spread and aggressiveness of the tumor as well as your general health. Forms of treatment for melanoma include surgical excision, Mohs Micrographic Surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation. Sometimes lymph nodes are removed. Your dermatologist will help you to better understand these treatment options.

DON'T BECOME A STATISTIC

1 in 6 Americans will develop skin cancer at some point in life. At least 90% of these cancers result from exposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation.

Although melanoma accounts for only 4% of all skin cancers, it is responsible for approximately 79% of all deaths that arise from skin cancers.

Melanoma develops on the skin of approximately 53,600 Americans annually, with an estimated 7,400 dying from melanoma every year.