

# Did You Know?

## Skin Cancer

### Types of skin cancer:

#### Basal cell carcinoma

- Most often develops on sun-exposed sites of the skin (face, neck, shoulders) as pink and shiny bumps that grow and have a tendency to erode and/or bleed.
- Typically affects only the skin but can lead to significant disfigurement.

#### Squamous cell carcinoma

- Most often develops in sun-exposed sites of the skin as pink and scaly bumps that grow and have a tendency to erode and/or bleed.
- Early detection is critical since these skin cancers can spread to other parts of the body and lead to death.

#### Melanoma

- The majority of melanoma is caused by the sun, while genetics may also play a role.
- Early detection is critical, as the survival rates worsen with later detection. (The five-year survival rate of Stage 1 melanoma is 98 percent; five-year survival rate is 63 percent for Stage 3 disease and 17 percent for Stage 4 disease.)
- The most important warning sign of skin cancer is a new spot on the skin, especially if that spot changes shape, color or size. Another potential symptom is a spot that looks different from all the others on your skin (known as the “ugly duckling sign”).

### How skin cancer develops:

Skin is an elastic organ — the largest in the body. Its main functions include protecting internal organs, controlling body temperature, shielding the body from ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun and helping the body make vitamin D. Skin cancer develops when abnormal cells in the skin’s layers grow uncontrollably — most commonly because of too much exposure to UV light from the sun or other sources, like tanning beds and sun lamps. The most common types of skin cancer — basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas — tend to appear on areas of the body exposed to the sun, such as the face, neck, ears and hands.

### Skin cancer prevention:

UV damage is cumulative, meaning it begins building up in childhood, so prevention should start young.

The best ways to lower your risk for skin cancer include shielding the skin as much as possible from UV radiation:

- Use sunscreen and reapply at least every two hours
- Wear protective clothing, including fabrics not easily penetrated by UV light
- Wear other protective items such as hats and sunglasses
- Stay in the shade during peak hours when the sun’s UV rays are most intense (from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.)
- Avoid tanning salons and sun lamps

People with darker complexions have a much lower risk of most types of skin cancer. When they do develop melanoma, people with darker skin types are much more likely to have rare types of melanoma such as acral lentiginous melanoma, an aggressive type affecting the palms of the hands, soles of the feet and nail bed.

The most important thing to remember is: if you have an unusual spot showing up on your skin that you cannot explain, call your Doctor and let him/her diagnose the spot.

Resource and for additional information go to:

<https://www.cityofhope.org/clinical-program/skin-cancer-and-melanoma>