

# MALIGNANT MELANOMA

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## PATIENT INFORMATION

**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.

### HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF?

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 physician 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 physician.

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.

### DON'T BECOME A STATISTIC

*1 in 5 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 3% of all skin cancers, it is responsible for approximately 75% of all deaths that arise from skin cancers. Melanoma develops on the skin of approximately 68,000 Americans annually, with an estimated 8,650 dying from melanoma every year.*

Source 2009 American Cancer Society

### TREATMENT OPTIONS

After sections of tissue from a biopsy of your skin are assessed under a microscope by a dermatopathologist and determined to be melanoma, your physician 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 physician will help you to better understand these treatment options

#### 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 mm actual size — 
- E** **Evolving**  
New and/or significant change in size, shape, shade of color or symptoms of bleeding, itching and tenderness

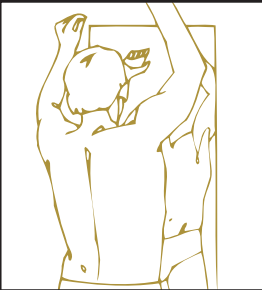
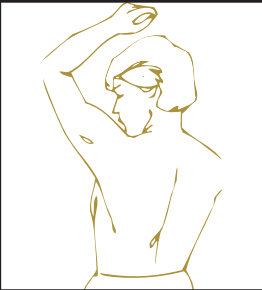
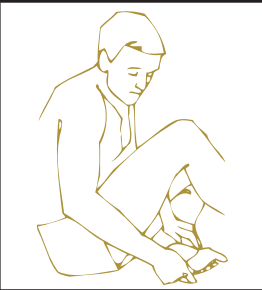
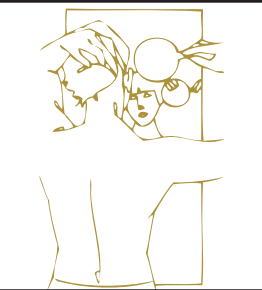
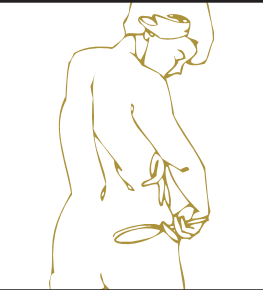
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### PERIODIC SELF-EXAMINATION

Aids in the recognition of any new or evolving lesions. Consult your physician if changes are noticed.

				
<b>STEP 1</b>	<b>STEP 2</b>	<b>STEP 3</b>	<b>STEP 4</b>	<b>STEP 5</b>
Examine your body front and back in the mirror, then right and left sides, arms raised.	Bend elbows and look carefully at forearms and upper arms and palms.	Look at the backs of legs and feet, spaces between toes and soles.	Examine back of neck and scalp with a hand mirror. Part hair for a closer look at scalp.	Finally, check back and buttocks with a hand mirror.

Images and content provided by the American Academy of Dermatology

### DO YOU WANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON MALIGNANT MELANOMA?

**American Academy of Dermatology**  
888.462.DERM  
www.aad.org

**The Skin Cancer Foundation**  
800.SKIN.490  
www.skincancer.org

**National Cancer Institute**  
800.4.CANCER  
www.cancer.gov

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Passion for Patients is the expression of who we are and delivering patient care at the highest possible level is what we do. Our goal is to have every Dermpath Diagnostics associate exclusively focused on giving their best, realizing that there is a concerned patient, a life, behind every specimen and diagnosis. This patient centric goal is what drives the continual development of our Passion for Patients company culture.

To obtain more information about skin cancer and to learn more about the services Dermpath Diagnostics provides, please visit our website.

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