



## **When to See a Dermatologist for your mole (created by the American Academy of Dermatology)**

You should see a dermatologist when you:

- Find a lesion that **you suspect could be skin cancer**, or
- **Have risk factors** that increase the likelihood you will develop skin cancer

Dermatologists are best qualified to evaluate and treat skin cancer because they receive extensive medical training in the diagnosis and treatment of skin conditions, including skin cancer. In advanced cases, a dermatologist may be part of a team of experts who treats the cancer.

### **Find a Suspicious Lesion**

People of all races and skin types get skin cancer. With early detection and proper treatment, skin cancer is highly curable. If left untreated, skin cancer can damage surrounding tissue and in some cases spread. Once it spreads, the prognosis is poor.

To detect skin cancer in its early and most treatable stage, dermatologists recommend that everyone perform regular self-examinations of their skin. Today, more than half of all diagnosed melanomas are first identified by the patient. A self-examination is easy to do. Using a full-length mirror and a handheld mirror, check your entire body for moles and other lesions that:

- **Have grown**
- **Bleed and crust over continually but do not heal**
- **Have changed (includes appearance of a new mole)**
- **Look unusual**

If you discover a mole or other lesion with any of the above characteristics, don't delay in making an appointment to see a dermatologist. You also should see a dermatologist if you notice

- **a brown to black-colored streak underneath or bordering a nail**
- **a pigmented mass in your mouth**
- **a dark spot on an eye**

Remember, **early detection could save your life.**

For more information about how to examine your skin for signs of skin cancer, click [here](#)

<https://www.aad.org/spot-skin-cancer/understanding-skin-cancer/how-do-i-check-my-skin/how-to-perform-a-self-exam>

### **Have Risk Factors? See a Dermatologist Regularly**

If you have risk factors that increase the likelihood of developing skin cancer, you should perform self-examinations as well as see a dermatologist for regular checkups. These risk factors include:

- Close blood relative has/had melanoma, several more distant relatives have a history of melanoma, or a family history of other skin cancers
  - Personal history of skin cancer
  - History of exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun, tanning beds, or sun lamps — whether intermittent or year round, even if the exposure was years ago
  - Experienced severe, especially blistering, sunburns
  - Fair skin, especially when the person has blond or red hair and blue, green, or gray eyes
  - Sun sensitive, or tend to burn and freckle rather than tan
  - Large, asymmetrical, or unusual-looking mole(s)
  - 50-plus moles
  - History of x-ray treatments for acne
  - Taking immunosuppressive medications for severe arthritis or to prevent organ rejection
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