

Protect your skin to prevent skin cancer



Skin cancer is the most common of all cancer types. More than 3.5 million people are diagnosed with skin cancer each year in the United States—that's more than all other cancers combined. Most skin cancers can be detected early through skin examinations. Both regular exams by your doctor and checking your own skin frequently can help you find new skin or mole changes.

When examining your own skin, look for these warning signs:

A (asymmetry): Do you have a mole or spot that is asymmetrical?

B (border): Do you have a mole or spot with an uneven border?

C (color): Do you have a mole or spot that is more than one color?

D (dimension): Do you have a mole or spot larger than the size of a pencil eraser?

E (evolving): Do you have a mole or spot that has changed over time?

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If you notice any suspicious spots or feel uncomfortable with the way a mole is changing it is important to talk to your doctor. In fact, you should see a dermatologist once a year for a skin check, or more often if recommended based on your family and medical history.

Protect your skin

Too much exposure to the sun's harmful UV rays is the number one cause of skin cancer. Take these steps to defend your skin against damage.

- **Apply sunscreen** with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or greater at least 30 minutes before sun exposure
- **Reapply at least every 2 hours** after first application or more if you are sweating or swimming
- **Wear sunglasses** with total UV protection
- **Stay in the shade** as much as possible
- **Wear wide-brimmed hats** that cover and protect areas like your head, neck, face and ears
- **Wear clothing made of tightly woven fabrics** that are light, vivid colors
- **If you already have sunburn**, wear long-sleeved shirts and pants to prevent further skin damage
- **Avoid direct exposure as much as possible** during peak UV radiation hours, between 10 am and 2 pm
- **Avoid tanning beds, period**

Source: American Academy of Dermatology.
<https://www.aad.org/media/stats-skin-cancer>



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