

Are you at risk for **MELANOMA?**

Do you have sun-sensitive skin that gets freckles easily?

Freckles are a barometer of sun sensitivity and damage. A person who gets freckles has twice the risk of getting melanoma.

Do you have a history of spending too much time in the sun?

The most common kinds of melanoma (superficial, spreading and nodular) are associated with heavy, intermittent exposure to the sun, such as the big doses of sun on vacations and weekends.

Do you frequently use tanning salons?

Melanoma has become the most common cancer in women ages 25–29 due to the increase in patronage of tanning salons. Indoor tanning increases the risk for melanoma by 75%.

Do you have a lot of common moles or any “funny looking” dysplastic moles?

Moles, regardless of type, are a risk factor for melanoma. These moles tell you that your skin bears watching and warrants protecting.

Do you have a personal or family history of any of the common skin cancers, such as squamous or basal-cell carcinoma?

If you or your family members have had any of the common skin cancers, your risk for melanoma increases.

Usually it is a combination of these factors that increases your risk for melanoma. Make it a regular practice to examine your skin, and the skin of those you love, for the best protection.

Examine your skin for Melanoma

Examining skin regularly for any suspicious mole is the best way to detect skin cancer when it is still amenable to cure by simple excision. Here is how to conduct a self-examination for melanoma. You will need a full-length mirror and a hand mirror. Conduct your examination in a well-lighted room.



1. Examine your torso front and back in the mirror, then right and left sides with arms raised. Move on to your face checking lips, mouth and ears.



2. Bend elbows and look carefully at forearms and upper underarms. Examine hands including palms. Check between fingers.



3. Examine the front and backs of legs from thighs to feet. Check ankles, tops of feet and between toes. Examine heels and soles.



4. Examine the back of your neck, ears and scalp with a hand mirror. Part your hair for a closer look.



5. Finally, check your back and buttocks with a hand mirror.

If you find a lesion that you believe could be melanoma, see your doctor right away. Early diagnosis can be lifesaving.

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