

Who should I see if I find something on my skin?

The Skin Cancer College Australasia provides a *Locate-a-Doctor* service at www.skincancercollege.org

This is a list of doctors in Australia and New Zealand who have completed additional training and been tested on their knowledge and skill in skin cancer diagnosis and treatment. Your general practitioner (GP) can also check your skin, or they may recommend you see a doctor who is more experienced in this area if they are concerned about a mole or spot, or if you have already had skin cancer.



Remember – the most effective management for skin cancer is early detection and treatment.

The Skin Cancer College Australasia is a not-for-profit organisation providing specific training for doctors and nurses to improve the diagnosis and treatment of skin cancer.

Skin cancer types

The three main types of skin cancer are:

BCC (Basal Cell Cancer)

- > the most common, usually pink and may bleed or itch
- > grow locally (potentially more dangerous on the face)

SCC (Squamous Cell Cancer)

- > more serious as they can spread to the lymph glands
- > often arise from sunspots, are usually scaly and may be tender

Melanoma

- > the most serious as they can spread via the blood stream throughout the body
- > can arise anywhere on the body, including the face, scalp, lips, ears, under fingernails or toe nails (brown stripes), on the soles of feet, and in areas that have never seen the sun!
- > can be raised or flat, fast or slow growing and can rarely be pink (especially in fair skinned people).

Melanoma is the third most common life threatening cancer in both men and women overall

How do I check to see if I have a skin cancer?

Here is a simple guide to help you check your skin and recognise the early signs of skin cancer.

SCAN YOUR SKIN

and look for a spot or mole that is:

S	Sore	scaly, itchy, bleeding, tender and doesn't heal within 6 weeks
C	Changing	in appearance (size, shape or colour)
A	Abnormal	looks different, feels different, or stands out when compared to others
N	New	most melanomas and all other skin cancers arise this way

- > The more of the above **SCAN** features a spot or mole has the more concerning it may be. (e.g. a **New** mole that is **Changing** in appearance and that is **Abnormal** is one that should be checked by a doctor urgently.)
- > Most people have made all their moles by the time they are 40. A new mole after this age is more suspicious, and the older you are the more suspicious a new mole is.
- > If you do find a spot or mole of concern, see your doctor for either a "spot check", or a full skin check.
- > Become familiar with the spots and moles on your skin. You should check your own, and/or your partner's, skin regularly.

This brochure is the result of collaboration between these organisations:



The Skin Cancer College Australasia is a not-for-profit organisation providing specific training for doctors and nurses to improve the diagnosis and treatment of skin cancer.

ph +61 414 910 355 | www.skincancercollege.org



Melanoma Patients Australia

Melanoma Patients Australia aims to reduce the impact of melanoma on all Australians by promoting awareness of melanoma and providing support, information and advocacy services to melanoma patients, their carers families and friends.

ph 1300 88 44 50 | www.melanomapatients.org.au



Danger Sun Overhead is an education program run exclusively through Melanoma Patients Australia that promotes awareness, prevention and early detection of skin cancer including melanoma. The Danger Sun Overhead Program is delivered to work places, schools, sporting clubs and community groups.

ph 0418 728 347 | www.melanomapatients.org.au



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www.scanyourskin.org

Disclaimer: The information available in this brochure should not be used as a substitute for advice from a properly qualified medical professional who can advise you about your own individual medical needs. It is not intended to constitute medical advice and is provided for general information purposes only.

Are you at risk of skin cancer?

SCAN YOUR SKIN

Sore • Changing • Abnormal • New

know what you are looking for

www.scanyourskin.org



Are you at risk?

Most of us know that protecting our skin from the sun is the most important step to preventing skin cancer.

- > But what if your skin hasn't always been protected?
- > Maybe you can't always avoid the sun?
- > Or perhaps there is a history of skin cancer in your family?

Preventing skin cancer is also about knowing your risk level. The most effective management is early detection and treatment.

This simple guide has been developed by doctors and researchers so you can quickly calculate your skin cancer risk and recognise the early signs of skin cancer. You don't need any special skills – simply answer ten easy questions and take a few minutes to SCAN your skin.

It's your doctor's job to diagnose skin cancer, but you will know better than anyone else if something on your skin is new or changing – two important early warning signs.

Remember – together with sun protection, early detection is your best defence against skin cancer.

*We all have Skin,
We all live under the Sun*

What should I know about skin cancer?

- > Australia and New Zealand have the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world
- > Skin cancers account for around 80% of all newly diagnosed cancers
- > More than 90% of skin cancers are caused by exposure to the sun
- > Melanoma is the most common life threatening cancer in the 15 to 44 year age group
- > Melanoma is the third most common life threatening cancer in both men and women overall

What is your risk of developing skin cancer?

- > The **orange** number is the points value for each answer.
- > Write the points for your answers in the white column.
- > Add up your **total points** to work out your risk.

		POINTS
1	What is your gender? Male (1) Female (0)	
2	What is your age group? 60+ (2) 40-59yrs (1) 39 or less (0)	
3	What is ethnic origin based on the majority of your ancestors? Northern European or UK (1) Other (0)	
4	When you went out in the sun without sunscreen, did you burn easily and never tan, (or only tan a little bit)? Yes (1) No, I could get a tan (0)	
5	Since you were born, how many times have you been so severely sunburnt that you peeled and blistered? More than 5 (2) 2 to 5 (1) Less than 2 (0)	
6	As a teenager, how many moles and/or freckles did you have? Many (2) Some (1) Few or none (0)	
7	Has anyone in your immediate family had a melanoma? (these are the most dangerous skin cancer and are always treated by surgery) Yes (1) No (0)	
8	Have you had sunspots burnt or frozen off? More than 10 (3) 1 to 10 (2) none (0)	
9	Have you had any type of skin cancer cut out? (e.g. BCC, SCC, Melanoma) More than 10 (6) 1 to 10 (4) none (0)	
10	Were any of the skin cancers in question 9 a Melanoma? Yes (3) No (0)	
TOTAL POINTS		

What your score represents

Score	Risk	What you should do...
9 +	High	If you haven't had a skin check in the past year, get a check as soon as possible. You should also SCAN your skin yourself every 3 months, plus have a skin check by a doctor at least once a year, or possibly more frequently as determined by the doctor.
4 to 8	Medium	Start with a skin check by a doctor. SCAN your skin at least twice a year. Continue to see a doctor for skin checks every 2-3 years, or if you have any concerns.
0 to 3	Low	SCAN your skin yourself at least once each year. See a doctor for a one-off skin check, or if you have any concerns. Remember – Low risk doesn't mean NO risk!

(This is a general guide only. Your doctor may recommend a different skin check programme)

More than 90% of skin cancers are caused by exposure to the sun

What happens during a skin check?

How long does a skin check take?

A skin check can take up to 30 minutes. This includes some time for the doctor to ask you questions about your general health. Make sure you tell the doctor about any spots or moles you have which are new, sore, changing or unusual. The actual check of your skin can take from 5 to 20 minutes depending on your skin type and the number of moles and spots to be looked at.

What equipment does the doctor use?

Your doctor will use a dermatoscope to have a close up / magnified look at any spots of concern. A dermatoscope is a bit like a torch with a magnifying glass attached to the end. Using a dermatoscope is painless. Sometimes the doctor may take a photograph of a spot or mole so it can be monitored over time for any changes in appearance.

Do I have to get undressed?

Yes - down to your underwear.

What happens if the doctor finds anything which could be skin cancer?

Your doctor will tell you straight away if you have any moles or spots which require testing.

To test the mole or spot the doctor will either take a small biopsy (sample) of it, or completely excise (cut out) the spot of concern – under local anaesthetic of course. In most cases another appointment will be made to remove the abnormal mole or spot. This type of minor surgery can be carried out at your doctor's surgery or office. There is usually no need for this to be done in a hospital.

After it is removed, the mole or spot is sent to a pathology laboratory for testing. Receiving the test results can take from one to several days, depending on the pathology provider.

What happens if skin cancer is found?

In most cases, when found early, skin cancer can be easily and successfully treated with surgery. Most skin cancers are cured once they are removed. Other non surgical treatments such as creams, radiotherapy, or light therapy may be used but this will depend on the type of skin cancer found.

What happens after the skin check?

Depending on your level of risk for developing skin cancer, your doctor may recommend regular follow up skin checks. The frequency for follow up skin checks can vary from every few months, to once every year or two. Most doctors will have a system in place to send you a skin check reminder, but it is also a good idea to keep your own record of when a follow up skin check is due.

How much does a skin check cost?

The cost for a skin check will vary depending on the practice or clinic you visit. Within Australia, if you hold a valid Medicare card, in most cases you will be able to claim for a rebate. It is best to check with your doctor or clinic before making an appointment.

Australia and New Zealand have the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world

