

Be smart about your skin

Know your ABCDs

One person dies of melanoma every hour. But when identified early, melanoma is almost always curable. Follow the “ABCDs” to evaluate your moles, and use the self-examination guide on the back of this page to check your skin regularly.



ASYMMETRY

Drawing an imaginary line through a mole, do both sides look alike? If one half of a mole doesn't match the other, see your doctor.



BORDER

Check the outside edge of a mole. Is the edge sharp and easy to distinguish from the surrounding skin? If the edges are ragged or fuzzy, see your doctor.

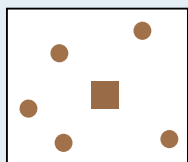


COLOR

Check the color of a mole. Is the color the same throughout the mole, or does it vary with shades of dark brown to black, or shades of white, red or blue? If there are any color changes from one area of a mole to another, see your doctor.



All in the family



Not in the family

DIFFERENCE

Check your skin every month to look for changes in moles or other spots. Are any of your moles different? Have they changed in size, shape, color, or are they suddenly itchy? If you notice a difference in size or look of any mole, see your doctor.

The moles on your body should share a common look, a “family resemblance.” If one mole seems different than the rest of the “family,” see your doctor. If the entire “family” looks somewhat strange, as long as they resemble each other and are not changing, there may be no reason for special concern. However, having a “family” of strange looking moles on your skin is associated with a higher risk of melanoma anywhere on the skin surface. So when in doubt, see your doctor.

This information is provided by the University of Michigan Department of Dermatology, and is intended to serve only as a guide. To ensure an accurate diagnosis, see your doctor for a skin cancer screening.

Know the skin you're in

Prevention is the best defense against skin cancer. Check your skin every month, following these five steps and using the ABCD guide to evaluate your moles.

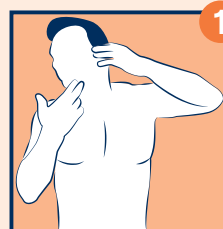
Get Ready!

Find an area with a bright light and full-length mirror. You'll also need a hand mirror, a chair or stool, and a place to elevate your feet.

Get Set!

Set aside enough time to check yourself top-to-bottom and side-to-side. Remember, skin cancer can appear in areas never exposed to the sun!

Go!



1 Begin with your face, ears, head and neck, using mirrors to inspect from all directions. Ask your hair stylist or barber to examine your scalp, too.



2 Move down, examining the skin on the torso and shoulders. Remember to check in skin folds.



3 Moving from the upper arm down, inspect each arm, including the underarm, forearm, and elbow. Work all the way to the hand, checking each finger and fingernail.



4 Using both mirrors, examine the back, buttocks and the back of the legs.



5 In a seated position, finish checking the legs. Elevating one foot at a time, inspect each foot, remembering to check the underside of the foot and between the toes. Using a hand mirror, examine the genital area.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit us online at: rogelcancercenter.org/skin-cancer OR medicine.umich.edu/dept/dermatology