

# Moving oncology care forward so that you can look forward to life's moments

Self-examination for skin cancer prevention and early detection



# Self-examination for skin cancer prevention and early detection

Here's how dermatologists recommend to conduct a self-examination:

## 1 What you need

- A full length mirror
- A partner or handheld mirror
- Good lighting

## 2 When

- Monthly
- It can be easier to remember if you pick a specific day each month (such as the first day of the month) or if you set alerts on your phone

## 3 What to look for

- Look at every mole, freckle, or age spot, taking note of any changes in size, shape, colour, texture or other symptoms such as bleeding or itching
- Dark spot, growth, or darker patch of skin that is growing, bleeding, or changing in any way
- A sore that won't heal – or heals and returns
- A sore that has a hard time healing, especially if the sore appears in a scar or on skin that was injured in the past
- Patch of skin that feels rough and dry
- Dark line underneath or around a fingernail or toenail

## 4 How to check your skin

- Look at your skin from head to toe
- Examine hard-to-see areas like the top of your head and back by using a handheld mirror or asking a partner to check these areas

## 5 Where to look closely

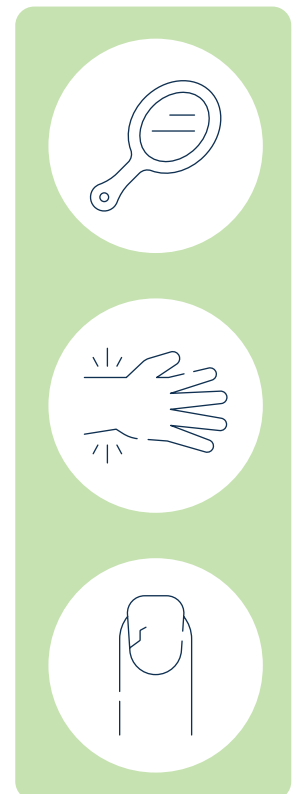
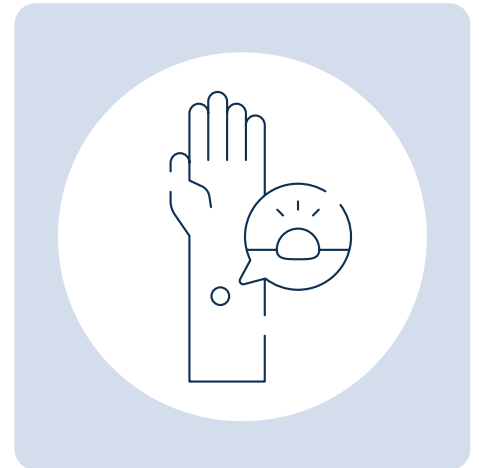
- Check places that get little sun — the bottoms of your feet, between toes, back of your legs, groin, underarms, and buttocks
- Spend time looking at the skin on your head, neck, and hands
- Be sure to look inside your mouth, examine your palms, and check for dark lines around and underneath your fingernails or toenails

## 6 What to do if you find something suspicious / of concern

See a dermatologist (skin specialist)

## 7 Why is this important

If performed monthly, you can find changes to the spots on your skin, which could be a warning sign of skin cancer. When treated early, treatment often cures skin cancer. In the later stages, skin cancer may have poor health outcomes.



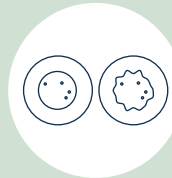
## ABCDEs of Melanoma

### Assymetry



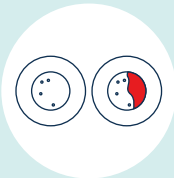
- Most malignant skin cancers are asymmetrical (the left and right hand side of the mole do not match or the top and bottom of the mole do not match)

### Border



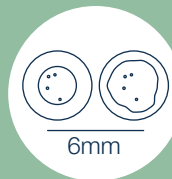
- Normal or benign moles are typically round
- If the border is notched or scalloped in appearance it would be described as an uneven or irregular border
- This is typical of malignant skin cancers

### Colour



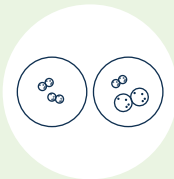
- Normal or benign moles are usually a brown or black colour throughout
- Malignant skin lesions may be multiple colours
- Melanomas may be black, red, white, blue and brown in one lesion

### Diameter



- If a lesion is greater than 6mm in diameter (the size of a pencil eraser), it should be investigated further

### Evolving



- Any change in the size, shape, colour, texture, diameter or elevation of a mole should be investigated further
- This is why annual skin examinations and monthly self-examinations are imperative to early detection

### References

- Shue-McGuffin KD, Powers K. Skin Cancer in People of Color: Misconceptions and Opportunities for Early Detection and Treatment. *J Dermatol Nurses' Assoc* 2002;14(4):152-160
- American Academy of Dermatology Association (AAD). Skin Cancer in People of Color. [online] [cited 2022 Sep 13]. Available from: <https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/skin-cancer/types/common/melanoma/skin-color>

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