



## Treatment Options

The prognosis for patients with basal cell carcinoma is good. Most cases of BCC can be cured, especially if discovered and treated early.

If you have BCC, your dermatologist will treat it by removing it. There are several ways a dermatologist may choose to remove BCC, including the following:

- **Electrodesiccation and curettage, which includes scratching the growth off with a curette, then burning it with an electrical needle**
- **Surgical removal**
- **Freezing (cryotherapy or cryosurgery)**
- **Chemotherapy medication applied to the skin**
- **Laser treatments**

However a case of BCC is treated, a dermatologist will tailor treatment based on the age and health of the patient, as well as the location and extent of the cancer.



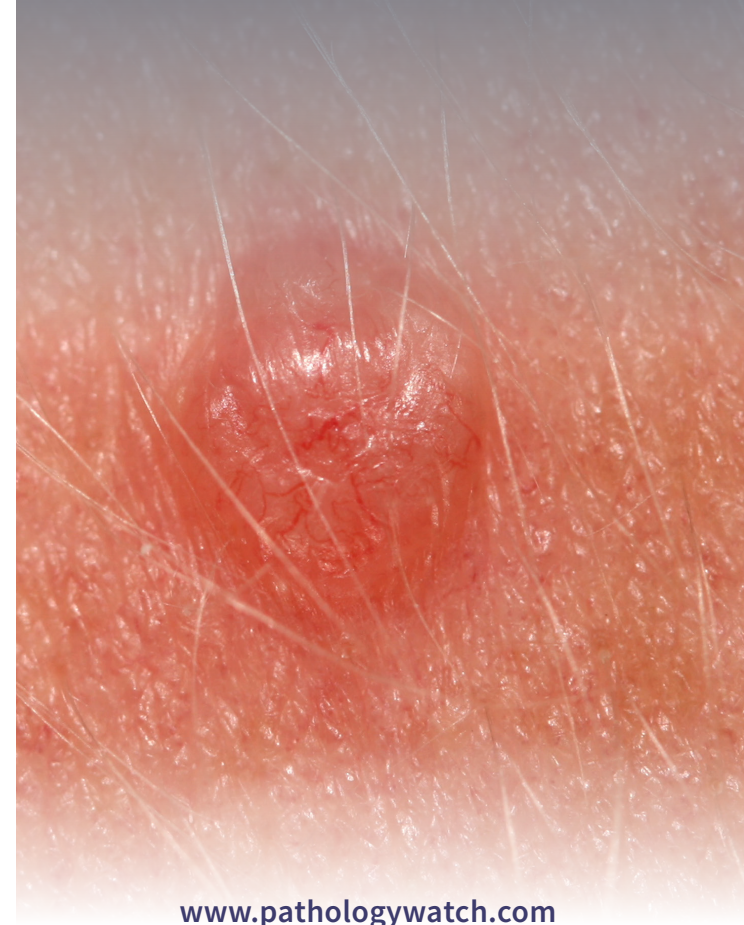
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# Basal Cell Carcinoma



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## How to Prevent BCC

The best way to prevent basal cell carcinoma is to be safe in the sun. Here are a few ways you can do just that:

- **Avoid being in the sun from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., when the sun is at its strongest.**
- **Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher every day. Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside and reapply every two hours or more frequently if you have been swimming or sweating.**
- **Wear protective clothing, like wide-brimmed hats, sunglasses, and long-sleeved shirts.**
- **Perform a skin self-examination regularly.**
- **Contact a dermatologist immediately if you notice any sudden, irregular, or alarming changes in your skin.**

## An Overview of Basal Cell Carcinoma

Basal cell carcinoma (BCC) is not only the most common type of skin cancer, but also the most frequent form of all cancers. It is estimated that 3.6 million cases of BCC are diagnosed in the United States alone each year.

This type of skin cancer begins in the basal cells, which are in charge of producing new skin cells and pushing older cells to the skin's surface to die and shed off.

When caught and treated early, most basal cell carcinomas are curable and cause little damage to the skin. To catch BCCs early, you should perform regular skin self-exams and search for growths or spots that look irregular in size, shape, or color.

## Risk Factors

BCC is caused by damage to the basal cells in the outer layer of the skin. Factors that can damage basal cells—and therefore increase your risk of developing basal cell carcinoma—include the following:

- **Sun exposure**
- **Use of tanning beds**
- **Fair skin**
- **Weakened immune system**
- **Age over 50**
- **A family history of skin cancer**
- **Certain genetic conditions**

## How to Spot a Potential Basal Cell Carcinoma

BCC can look quite different in each person; however, it typically appears as a growth or sore that doesn't heal.

While performing a self-examination of your skin, you should keep an eye out for the following characteristics:

- **Open sores**
- **Red patches**
- **Pink growths**
- **Growths that ooze, crust, or bleed**
- **Slightly elevated, rolled edges**
- **Growths with central indentation**

