



What happens if I'm diagnosed with melanoma?

First, don't panic.

Melanoma is highly treatable when it is caught early. If you are diagnosed with melanoma, your dermatologist will work with you to create the best treatment plan based on the growth rate of the cancer, how much it has spread, and your overall health.

Surgery is one of the most common treatments of melanoma, as it is an effective way to remove cancer from your body. Other treatments may include chemotherapy, immunotherapy, clinical trials, or targeted therapy.

Can I prevent melanoma?

One important thing you can do for your skin is to avoid unprotected sun exposure. UV light is a known carcinogenic that can cause skin cancer or turn a regular mole into melanoma, so it is crucial to prevent exposure to UV rays as much as possible. Here are a few steps you can take to protect your skin:

- **Wear protective clothing like shirts with long sleeves, sunglasses, a hat, and pants whenever possible.**
- **Stand in the shade, especially when the sun's rays are strongest (i.e., between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.).**
- **Apply sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher, and remember to reapply every two hours.**
- **Avoid tanning beds.**
- **Use a self-tanning product instead of subjecting yourself to UV rays.**



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What is melanoma?

Melanoma is a type of skin cancer that affects melanocytes, the cells that give our skin its color. It is often referred to as the most dangerous skin cancer because it can spread to other parts of the body. While it can be deadly, it has a high cure rate when it is discovered early.

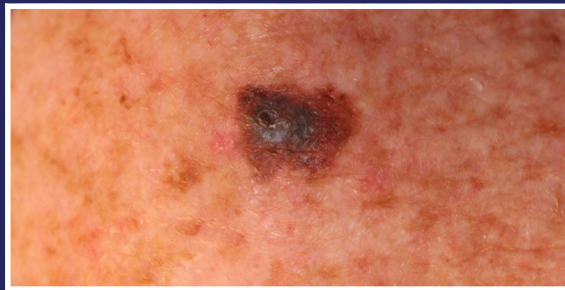
To spot potential melanoma, perform regular skin self-exams. Make sure to examine every part of your skin, including your scalp, between your fingers and toes, and even under your nails. Using the ABCDEs of melanoma (see next page), search for any signs that your mole may be more dangerous than a normal spot.



How can I find melanoma?

Melanoma does not have one set appearance. While some melanomas may look like a disfigured mole or sore, others may only appear as a line under the nail. Some may even look like a common skin condition, like a cyst, bruise, or age spot.

The ABCDEs of Melanoma is a system developed by dermatologists to help people identify any possible warning signs of skin cancer. Here are signs that your mole may actually be melanoma:



Asymmetry

If you draw a line through the spot, one half does not match the other half.



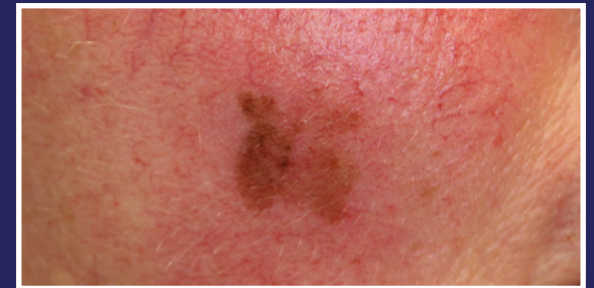
Border

The spot has an irregular shape and an undefined, crusty, or notched border.



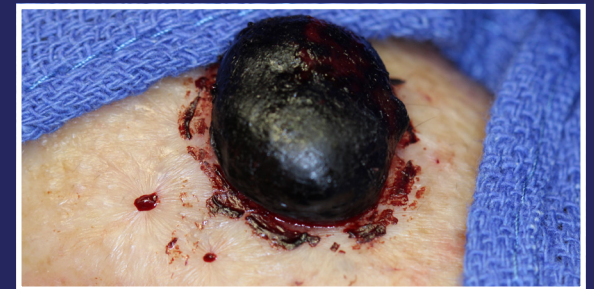
Color

There are several different colors or shades of the same color in the spot.



Diameter

It is wider than 6 mm, i.e., about the same size as a pencil eraser.



Evolving

The spot has changed in size, shape, or color, or it looks different than other moles.

If you notice any of these signs or changes to a mole on your body, reach out to a dermatologist immediately.