



What are the Skin Cancer Types?

PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

Basal cell carcinoma accounts for about 80 percent of skin cancers. It usually develops on the head and neck but can occur anywhere on the skin. Its main cause is sun exposure. It also develops in people who received radiation therapy as children. It rarely spreads to other parts of the body.

Squamous cell carcinoma accounts for about 20 percent of skin cancers. Its main cause is sun exposure, and it can occur on many regions of the skin. It can also develop in skin that has been burned, damaged by chemicals, or exposed to X-rays. About 2 to 5 percent of squamous cell carcinomas spread to other parts of the body.

Melanoma, one of the most serious forms of skin cancer, can develop anywhere on the body. Invasive melanoma can grow deep into the skin and can invade lymph nodes and blood vessels. Metastatic melanoma can spread to distant parts of the body.

Other, rare types of skin cancer include Merkel cell cancer, Kaposi sarcoma, other sarcomas, cutaneous (skin) lymphoma, and skin adnexal tumors.

Stay Sun Safe

What's the best way to use sunscreen? Dr. C. Joseph Bennett at RBOI recommends the following:

- Choose sunscreen with 30 SPF or higher. Don't use any past its expiration date.
- Cover your body with at least an ounce of sunscreen and shake it before use.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours (sooner if you get wet, sweat, or wipe your skin).
- Apply sunscreen even on cloudy days.
- Choose lip balm with sunscreen and use it year-round.

Dr. Bennett also recommends staying out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., and wearing protective clothing and hats that cover your ears and neck.



Which to Use, Surgery or Radiation?

Skin cancer treatments include surgery, radiation, cryotherapy (freezing the tumor), and chemotherapy applied to the skin. The method used depends on treatment effectiveness, treatment time and cost, the cancer's size and features, and the patient's general health.

Studies show that for basal and squamous cell carcinomas, surgery and radiation treatments are equally effective.

In Mohs surgery, thin layers of skin are cut away and examined for cancer until no cancer is found. Surgery is used for small skin cancers that can be easily removed. It is also used in young patients, for whom radiation may pose a greater risk.

Radiation treatment is commonly used for advanced or multiple lesions, in cases where the cancer has spread to lymph nodes, in locations where surgery can cause deformities (like the eyelid, external ear, nose, and upper lip), and in cases where some cancer remains after surgery. Radiation is also used for people who cannot have surgery or who are concerned about scarring.

by the numbers

800,000

Annual cases of basal cell carcinomas in the US



more than 200,000

Annual cases of squamous cell carcinomas in the US



100,640

Estimated melanoma cases diagnosed in the U.S. in 2024



8,290

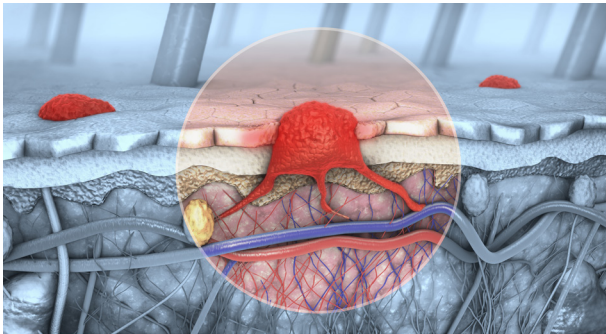
Estimated deaths from melanoma in the U.S. in 2024

Moles: Benign, or Melanoma?

When examining moles, use the ABCDE rule:

- A=Asymmetry:** One half of a mole or birthmark does not match the other.
- B=Border:** Edges are irregular, ragged, notched, or blurred.
- C=Color:** Color is not the same all over and may include different shades of brown or black, or may have patches of pink, red, white, or blue.
- D=Diameter:** Spot is larger than 6 millimeters across (about pencil eraser width).
- E=Evolving:** The mole's size, shape, or color changes.

Check to see if a spot looks different from all the other spots on your skin. If you see something that causes you concern, tell your doctor.



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