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Melanoma

DATE

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READ TIME

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Melanoma begins in melanocytes which are a subtype of cells located in the basal layer of the epidermis. These cells produce melanin which is a pigment that colors the skin and is the reason moles are a brown/black color. Melanoma can eliminate melanin production which causes the mole to turn pink or white.

People with pale skin are more often diagnosed with melanoma, and although melanoma can occur anywhere on the skin, it is most often seen on the trunk of men and on the legs of women. Melanomas are known to be associated with sunburns. Individuals with dark or black skin tones have a lesser chance of developing melanoma. If a melanoma does appear on a darker skin toned person, it will typically present on a lighter region of the skin such as the palms, soles of the feet or under the nails.

Melanomas can also occur in the eyes, genitals or mouth, although these forms of melanoma are much rarer. Melanoma is easily treated if found early but can spread to other tissues in advanced stages.

What Caused Your Cancer? ×



Causes, Risk Factors & Symptoms of Melanoma

Although some people are predisposed to develop melanoma at some point in their life, this type of cancer can strike anyone.

Risk factors include:

- UV light exposure
- History of blistering sunburn
- Large number of moles
- Green or blue eyes, light-colored skin, freckles
- Family history of skin cancer
- Personal history of skin cancer
- Immune deficiencies
- Age – risk of melanoma increases with age
- Gender – women are more likely to develop melanoma before the age of 40, after the age of 40 this statistic reverses and men are more likely to develop this cancer

Symptoms of Melanoma

- a new mark or spot on the skin
- a mole or spot that changes size, shape, color or height
- a mole or spot that doesn't look like other spots on your skin
- a mole or spot where one side of the spot does not match the other, it is uneven
- a mole or spot that doesn't have a well-defined border
- a mole or spot that has varying colors or has changed color. The coloring may be shades of brown, black, pink, white, red or blue.
- a mole or spot that is more than 6 mm wide
- a sore that will not heal
- a change in sensation of a mole or spot, such as itching, tingling, tenderness or pain
- a mole or spot that is crusted or bleeding
- spread of pigment from the border of a spot to surrounding skin
- new moles that grow around or in close proximity to an existing mole
- redness or a new swelling beyond the border
- a growth under a fingernail or toenail or a new pigmented line in a nail

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Who Gets Melanoma

According to 2010-2012 data, approximately 2.1 percent of men and women will be diagnosed with melanoma of the skin at some point during their lifetime.

Prognosis if You Have Melanoma

Melanoma is easily treated if found early but can spread to other tissues in advanced stages.

The 5-year relative survival rate for Melanoma:

- Stage 1 — 98.4 percent
- Stage 2 and 3 — 62.4 percent
- Stage 4 — 17.9 percent

Conventional medicine's main types of treatment for bile duct cancer include:

- Surgery
- Immunotherapy
- Radiation therapy
- Targeted therapy
- Chemotherapy

How to Prevent Melanoma

Because UV light exposure and blistering sunburns are two major risk factors for developing melanoma, it is critical to protect your skin when the sun is at its most intense.

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Always remember to:

- Spend time in the shade between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Wear a T-shirt, hat, and sunglasses
- Use sunscreen with at least SPF 15, that has good UVA protection

Tanning beds are not a safe alternative to tanning outdoors. The intensity of some of the UV rays tanning beds produce can be 10 to 15 times higher than that of the midday sun.

Immune System Health

A healthy immune system remains your body's best defense. Not only is a weak immune system a major reason patients have cancer — and cancer itself can further weaken the immune system.

Beta glucans help regulate the immune system, making it more efficient. In addition, beta glucans stimulate white blood cells (lymphocytes) that bind to tumors or viruses and release chemicals to destroy it.

[Beta Glucan](#) has been approved in Japan, Australia, South Korea, and Taiwan as an immunoadjuvant therapy for cancer. In fact, helping with cancer is just the beginning with Beta Glucan. There have thousands of studies showing the product can protect against infections, lower your cholesterol, lower blood sugar, reduce stress, increase your antibody production, heal wounds, help radiation burns, overcome mercury-induced immunosuppression (like Thimerosal, used as a preservative in vaccines), help with diabetes, and even naturally prevent [metastasis](#) (or the spreading of your cancer).

Harvard Medical School suggests following general good-health guidelines is the single best step you can take toward keeping your immune system strong and healthy:

- Don't smoke.
- Eat a diet high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and low in

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saturated fat.

- Exercise regularly.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Control your blood pressure.
- If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation.
- Get adequate sleep.
- Take steps to avoid infection, such as washing your hands frequently and cooking meats thoroughly.
- Get regular medical screening tests for people in your age group and risk category.

More Information: [Building the Immune System](#)

Healthy Diet

Your diet plays a role in a healthy immune system. The top vitamins your immune system needs to perform include:

- **Vitamin C** — helps to repair and regenerate tissues and aids in the absorption of iron
- Vitamin E — a powerful antioxidant that helps your body fight off infection
- Vitamin B6 — supports adrenal function and is necessary for key metabolic processes
- Vitamin A — aids immune function and helps provide a barrier against infections
- Vitamin D — modulates cell growth, promotes neuromuscular and immune function, and reduces inflammation
- Folate — key in development of red blood cells (a lack of Folate can make the body susceptible to cancer)
- Iron — helps your body carry oxygen to cells
- **Selenium** — slows the body's overactive responses to certain aggressive forms of cancer
- Zinc — slows the immune response and cor

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Sources: *American Cancer Society, National Cancer Institute, Cancer Research UK, Cancer Research Society, Canadian Cancer Society*

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