

### What is skin cancer screening?

During a skin exam, a physician or nurse checks your skin for moles, birthmarks or other areas that look abnormal in color, size, shape or texture. Self-exams may also be performed at home. If you notice any changes to your skin, such as a new growth, a sore that does not heal, or a change in a mole, you should consult your physician.

If an area of the skin looks abnormal, a biopsy may be performed to determine if the suspicious tissue is cancerous.

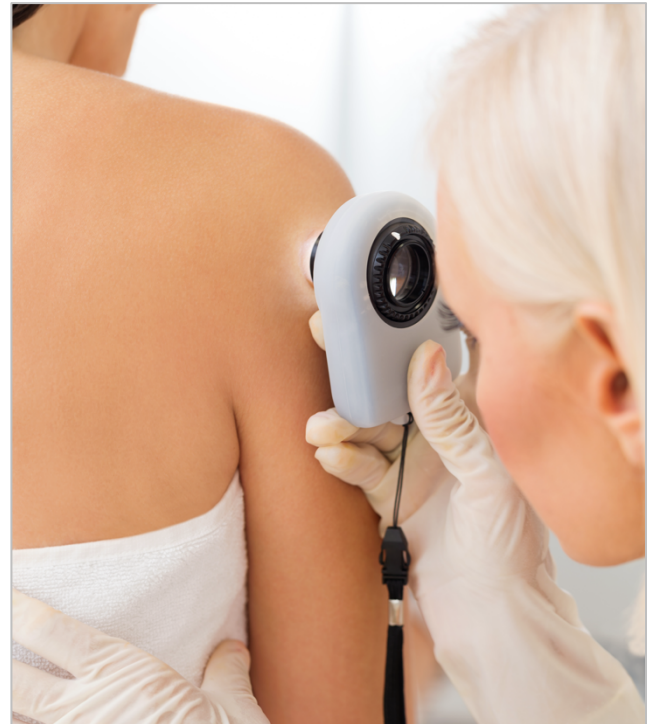
### What causes skin cancer?

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the U.S. Most skin cancers are caused by too much exposure to ultraviolet rays from the sun, tanning beds or sunlamps. Over time, this exposure may lead to changes in skin texture, premature aging of the skin and, in some cases, skin cancer.

### What are the signs of skin cancer?

Any changes to your skin should be discussed with your physician. It is important to note that not all skin cancers look the same. Here are some symptoms to watch for:

- A mole or spot that has an irregular shape with two parts that look very different.
- The border of a mole or spot that is irregular or jagged.
- Uneven color of a mole or spot.
- A mole or spot that is larger than the size of a pea.
- A mole or spot that has changed during the past few weeks or months.



### Types of skin cancer

There are two main types of skin cancer:

- **Nonmelanoma or keratinocyte carcinoma**, which includes squamous cell carcinoma and basal cell carcinoma. Most basal cell and squamous cell cancers can be cured.
- **Melanoma**, which is more likely to spread to other parts of the body and can be harder to cure. Melanoma is less likely to cause death if it is found and treated early.

Source: [NIH National Cancer Institute, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)



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