



SKIN

THE SKINNY ON SKIN

What picture is your skin painting about your overall health?

Taking care of the largest organ in your body is about more than just avoiding age spots and wrinkles. While the appearance of your skin can affect how you feel about yourself, it can also be an indication of an underlying condition.

If you notice a change in your skin, don't hesitate to make an appointment with your healthcare provider. Many common skin problems, such as rashes, hives, and contact dermatitis, can be resolved with a visit to your doctor. While not all skin changes are caused by skin cancer, it's important to get them checked out since early detection offers a better chance at successfully treating it.

Get to Know Your Skin

Your skin:

- Protects germs from entering your body
- Helps regulate body temperature
- Plays a role in keeping our immune system healthy
- Permits the sensations of touch, heat, and cold
- Makes up about 15% of your body weight
- Consists of about 300 million cells

Skin Cancer

- Most common type of cancer in the United States
- 5 million people are treated for skin cancer each year

Know Your ABCDEs

The American Academy of Dermatology offers a simple way to remember what to look for when you are checking your skin.

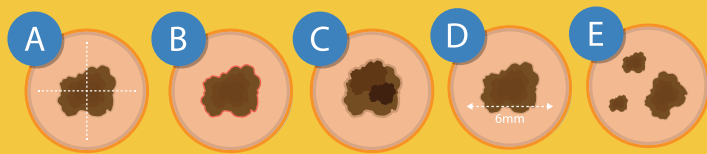
A is for Asymmetry: If you draw a line through the mole, the two halves will not match.

B is for Border: The edges are jagged, irregular or blurred.

C is for Color: The color or pigmentation is not uniform and/or has varying shades of tan, brown, or black, or may also sometimes appear blue, white, or red.

D is for Diameter: The size of the mole is greater than 1/4 inch (6mm)—the same size as a pencil eraser.

E is for Evolving: Over time, the mole changes shape, color, size, etc.



5 Ways to Help Prevent Skin Cancer

- 1 Don't use tanning beds or sun lamps.
- 2 Wear sunscreen every day.
- 3 Wear clothes that protect you from ultraviolet (UV) rays.
- 4 Wear sunglasses with UV protection.
- 5 Avoid spending time outdoors between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

RASH DECISIONS: COPING WITH COMMON SKIN CONDITIONS

Most skin problems are not cancer, but they can be aggravating. Getting the right diagnosis and treatment for common skin conditions can help resolve them sooner and more effectively than waiting it out or trying to treat them on your own.

Your healthcare provider may suggest the following treatments to help with common skin problems:

- Topical creams
- Oral antibiotics
- Antihistamines
- Corticosteroids
- Laser treatments



Contact Dermatitis - Contact with an irritant or allergen that causes redness, itching, swelling, scaling or small blisters. Poison ivy is a classic cause, but dryness can result from something as simple as contact with detergents or hair dyes. Regular moisturizing can help avoid dryness and flare-ups.

Eczema (Atopic Dermatitis) - Red, itchy bumps, that often starts in childhood. The cause of eczema is unknown, so the best bet for dealing with it is to make sure your skin stays moisturized. Medications can also help with the itching.

Psoriasis - Result of immune system miscommunications that cause skin to regenerate too quickly. It is identified by elevated red lesions with a silvery coating. Triggers for psoriasis include infection, stress, and simple environmental factors. It's important to diagnose psoriasis early, because up to one-third of sufferers also develop psoriatic arthritis, which can be disabling.

Hives - Raised red or white welts, are usually short-term, but can become chronic. Antihistamines can be an effective weapon against them. Hives in the mouth or throat that result in swelling, however, can disrupt swallowing or breathing and require emergency room care.

Rosacea - Presence of enlarged blood vessels, usually on the face. Early diagnosis and treatment can control and prevent progression. You may have rosacea if you have skin pinkness or redness with a "flushed" feeling. Rosacea may be caused by heredity, environment, or immune system problems. Heat, stress, and the tannic acids in alcoholic beverages can also aggravate rosacea.

ACTION ITEMS

DO ONE THING: If you notice a change in your skin, don't hesitate to make an appointment with your healthcare provider to get it checked out. Getting the right diagnosis and early treatment is key.

SHARED DECISION MAKING: Talk to your doctor about your personal risk for skin cancer and discuss how often you should receive regular skin screenings.