

# SKIN CANCERS

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**Skin cancer** is the most common of all cancers accounting for a third of all cancers in Canada. 1 in 7 Canadians will develop some form of skin cancer over their lifetime. There are two types of skin cancers: **Nonmelanoma & Melanoma**.

## NONMELANOMA SKIN CANCER (NMSC)

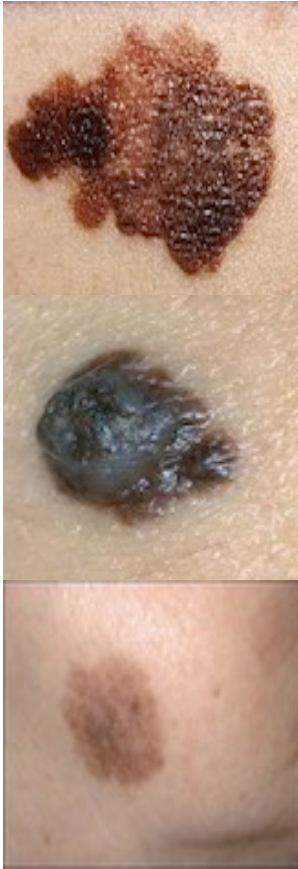


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- NMSC includes:
  - **Basal Cell Cancer (BCC)** (75% of cases)
  - **Squamous Cell Cancer (SCC)** (25% of cases)
- Most common Canadian cancer type.
- An estimated 81 300 cases in 2012.
- Fortunately most NMSC are rarely fatal.
- Usually found on sun exposed areas:
  - Face, Ears, Hands, Arms, V of neck, Back
- **BCC** come in many forms. They may appear as a firm pink lump or as a red flat crusty patch. They are slow growing & rarely spread distantly but can cause local damage as they expand.
- **SCC** grow more rapidly & may be tender. They may appear as a firm red rough lump, flat red crusty patch or a nonhealing sore (ulcer). These have the potential to spread distantly.
- See your doctor for any nonhealing growth.

# MALIGNANT MELANOMA (MM)



- A dangerous form of cancer of the skin cells that produce melanin (pigment).
- Less common than NMSC (6% of skin cancers).
- Lifetime risk for MM: Males: 1 in 74, Females: 1 in 90
- 5800 new cases in 2012 or 13 per 100 000 resulting in 970 deaths.
- Early detection results in a high cure rate.
- Can affect any part of the skin but commonly the back in males & legs in females.
- MM can develop from an existing mole or spontaneously.
- Usually dark brown or black but may be a mix of colours.
- Check new/existing moles using this simple **ABCDE** tool for worrisome features.
  - **A**symmetry. Draw a line through the growth. Are both halves equal?
  - **B**orders. Uneven, notched or irregular.
  - **C**olour: Different colours throughout.
  - **D**iameter: > 0.6 cm (size of eraser end on a pencil).
  - **E**volution: Change in colour, size, shape over a period of months.
- If any of these features are present or you note changes in your skin, see your doctor.

## RISK FACTORS FOR SKIN CANCER:

- Sun exposure
- Tanning Bed Use
- History of sunburns
- Numerous moles (>50)
  - Fair complexion
- Family history of skin cancer
- Past history of skin cancer
  - Diseases causing weakened immune system

## P R E V E N T I O N

- ✓ Avoid the sun especially at peak hours 10 am – 3 pm
- ✓ Do not use tanning beds
- ✓ Use UV protective clothing (hats, shirts)
- ✓ Wear a physical sunscreen (see health info – sunscreen article on this site)
- ✓ Perform regular skin examinations to check for new or changing growths
- ✓ See your doctor for yearly skin checks &/or if you identify any skin changes