



MELANOMA

The American Cancer Society estimates over 68,130 new cases of melanoma would be diagnosed in 2010. Of these new cases, nearly 8,700 may result in death. Melanoma is the most serious and deadliest form of skin cancer if not recognized early and treated ⁽¹⁾.

A major risk factor in developing melanoma is UV radiation or sun exposure. This can damage your skin resulting in a sunburn. The risk of melanoma doubles if a person has had five or more sunburns in their lifetime ⁽²⁾. Other risk factors for developing melanoma include: number of moles on your body, skin type (fair skin/freckles), heredity, age, and gender ⁽¹⁾.

The main warning sign of melanoma is a change in the color, size, or shape of a mole. The **ABCD rule** can help you determine if these changes indicate something more serious ⁽¹⁾:

- **A**symmetry- one half of the mole does not match the other half
- **B**order- mole edges are irregular, uneven, or ragged
- **C**olor- moles that have a variety of different colors and shadings
- **D**iameter- the mole is larger than ¼ inch (the size of a pencil eraser).

If a mole is suspicious and you are concerned it may be melanoma, call your doctor immediately and make an appointment to be checked.

During the summer, many people spend more time outside in the warm sunshine. Here are some important preventive guidelines to remember as you visit the pool or beach, work in the yard, or play outside ⁽²⁾:

- Seek shade between 10 am-4 pm
- Do not burn
- Avoid tanning and UV tanning booths
- Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher
- Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outdoors and every two hours
- Wear UV-blocking sunglasses
- Examine your skin every month

For more information on melanoma, please visit the following web-links:

Melanoma Information:

- [All About Melanoma](#)
- [Block the Sun, Not the Fun](#)
- [How To Spot Skin Cancer](#)
- [Melanoma Interactive Tutorial](#)
- [Which Sunscreen is Right For You?](#)
- [What is Ultraviolet Radiation?](#)

References:

1. [American Cancer Society](#)
2. [The Skin Cancer Foundation](#)

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