

Skin cancer - the symptoms and treatment

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According to Cancer Research UK, there are around 156,000 cases of non-melanoma skin cancer diagnosed in the UK each year.¹ And for melanoma skin cancer, there around 17,500 new cases a year in the UK.²

What causes malignant melanoma?

There is one main preventable factor that increases the risk of developing melanoma - UV light (radiation). UV light comes from the sun or sunbeds. But some people are more at risk of getting melanoma than others.

Moles and melanoma

Moles are clusters of cells that produce a pigment in the skin and it is normal to have them. Melanomas develop when those cells behave abnormally and invade the skin around moles or spread to other areas such as the lymph nodes, liver and lungs. The more moles on the body, the higher the risk of melanoma, however, that doesn't mean that you will definitely get melanoma if you have lots of moles. But it is advised you certainly keep a watchful eye on all your moles.

Who is at risk?

High risk groups include those with fair skin who burn easily, people with lots of moles, those with a family history of melanomas, those who were sunburnt in childhood and those with a weakened immune system.

What are the warning signs?

All melanomas do not look the same and there are several different types. Follow the 'ABCDE' rule below as a melanoma may show one or more of the following features:

A - asymmetry (an irregular shaped mole)

B - borders (ragged edges)

C - colour change or a mole that is a different colour in one part than in another

D - diameter (any increase in size, but particularly more than about 6mm across)

E - elevation (raising from the surface, especially if it is irregularly raised).

Treatment

If diagnosed with skin cancer, the specialist will determine the best treatment and care for you.

Treatment is likely to depend on:

- The type of skin cancer.
- How far it's grown or spread.
- Where the cancer is.
- The stage of the cancer (if relevant).

The specialist will discuss treatment options, their benefits and the possible side effects with you.

PHC'S CANCER SERVICES

When you decide it's the right time for you to take the next steps, we're here for you. We offer a range of cancer support services that may be available to you as part of your healthcare cover with PHC. Find out more about what these services entail and how to access them.

Skin cancer self-referral service

A cancer diagnosis, or even just the prospect of one, can be an extremely stressful and worrying time for you and your loved ones, but you can take comfort in knowing we have expert support available to you. If you've spotted any changes and are worried it may be cancer, we'll make sure you receive the tests you need, quickly. You won't even need to get a GP referral first¹; all you need to do is call us.

How to access

Call the PHC claims line on **0800 068 7111** or email claims@thephc.co.uk.

Dedicated nurse service

If you're diagnosed with cancer we can put you in touch with our Dedicated nurse service, to answer any questions you have.

Access genuine help, support and understanding from friendly, qualified nurses.

How to access

Call the PHC claims line on **0800 068 7111** (9am to 8pm, Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm, Saturday) and a member of the team will put you in touch with a nurse on diagnosis. Outside these hours our experienced nurses provide support via our 24/7 health support line.

Check4Cancer

We work closely with our provider, Check4Cancer, to make sure you're seen quickly if you suspect cancer. They're experts in their field and have years of experience providing clinical advice and treatment.

Our in-house healthcare professionals also have extensive knowledge, insight and experience in helping members who are facing cancer. They'll be there to support you and your family from diagnosis, and throughout treatment. If required, contact our team, who will seek to pre-authorise your treatment in line with your available benefits.

1. Non-melanoma skin cancer statistics – [Cancer Research UK](#)

2. Melanoma skin cancer statistics – [Cancer Research UK](#)