

PATIENT ADVISOR—PLEASE FEEL FREE TO COPY THIS PAGE

If you are at risk of melanoma, or have already been diagnosed with it, your health care provider may suggest other things for you to do, on top of what you are doing to help prevent skin cancer (see the Patient Handout).

1. Check for skin cancer by doing skin self-examinations (SSE) at least yearly—or more often if your provider thinks you should.

For help on how to do your own skin self-examination in pictures and videos, click on: <https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/skin-cancer/find/check-skin>



- Look at your body in a full-length mirror with lots of light for you to see. Start with the front of your upper body including your face, lips, ears, and eyes.
- Next look at your neck, shoulders, chest (including under breasts if applicable) and abdomen.
- Using both full-length and hand-held mirrors, check behind your ears, neck and upper back. Part your hair (or use a hair dryer to blow hair to show your scalp) to check all areas of your scalp. Get help from a partner or friend if needed.
- Lift both arms and check all sides of arms, hands, fingernails, underarms and between fingers.
- With hand mirror, check your back, buttocks, backs of thighs and calves.
- Finally, check fronts of legs and feet, including soles, toenails, toes and in between each toe.

2. Use a cell phone app such as Miiskin: <https://miiskin.com/>. It can help you keep track of your skin spots or moles with photos and will remind you to do your self-exam regularly.

3. Use the ABCDE formula (described below) to help you decide if any of the moles or spots look like melanoma when you do your self-exam. Talk with your health care provider if you think there are any changes in the way a mole or spot looks when you use the ABCDE formula.

For pictures and more about ABCDE go to:

<https://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-information/melanoma/melanoma-warning-signs-and-images/#abcde>

“A” stands for asymmetrical—does the mole/spot look different on each side?

“B” stands for border—do the outside edges look ragged or uneven?

“C” stands for colour—does the mole/spot have different colours within it?

“D” stands for diameter—is the mole or spot larger than the size of the eraser on a pencil?

“E” stands for evolving—has there been any change in the mole or spot over the past few weeks or months?

4. Tips to help you get ready for an appointment, if you have been diagnosed as having melanoma or have been told you are at “high risk”:

- Take off all nail polish.
- Wear your hair down/loose.
- Take off all makeup.
- Bring any photos you have taken of your “moles”/spots (on your cell phone or otherwise).

For more information see: <https://www.skincancer.org/early-detection/annual-exams/>.

Resources for More Information and Support Services

Mayo Clinic slide show on melanoma is available:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/melanoma/multimedia/melanoma/vid-20084726>

Melanoma Network

<https://www.melanomanetwork.ca>

Also provides “virtual support groups” for patients or family members



Canadian Cancer Society (choose your own province)

<https://www.cancer.ca/en/?region=bc>

