



Newsletter

CANCER CONSULTANTS OF AMERICA

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CANCER AND UNDERSTANDING®

Cancer Answers

Basal Cell Carcinoma

Skin cancer is a prominent form of cancer in the United States with Utah having the highest rate skin cancer diagnoses. Several factors contribute to the development of skin cancer including geographical location and skin complexion. Geographically, people living in higher altitudes with thinner atmosphere have greater exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation which is emitted by the sun. This UV radiation is a form of energy with potential to cause skin cancer development by mutating the DNA within cells of the skin. People with a lighter skin complexion have a higher risk of developing skin cancer when compared to people with a darker skin complexion. The reason for this increased risk is because less melanin is present within lighter skin. Melanin is an important protein produced by melanocytes (cells) within the skin. Furthermore, melanin contributes to the coloration of skin and absorbs the harmful UV radiation that could damage the DNA within the skin cells.

The human body is composed of many different physiological systems (digestive system, respiratory system, circulatory system) with the skin being part of the integumentary system. The skin is composed of three layers: the innermost layer is the hypodermis layer, the outermost layer is the epidermis, and the dermis layer is situated between these two layers. Skin cancer develops in the epidermis (outermost) layer of the skin. The most common form of skin cancer is basal cell carcinoma. This particular form of skin cancer originates in the deepest level of the epidermis known as the stratum basale. Other common forms of skin cancer are squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma. Although any form of cancer is concerning, melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer due to its ability to spread throughout the body at a faster rate than the other two forms of skin cancer.

Basal cell carcinoma is a type of skin cancer with unique properties that are not found among the other types of skin cancer. Approximately 4 out of 5 skin cancer diagnoses are basal cell carcinoma. Fortunately, skin cancer is a malignancy that is detected early because it can be visually identified at an early stage of growth.

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The diagnosis is typically easy to assign by a trained dermatologist and effective treatments have become routine. The most common form of treatment is Mohs surgery, which involves the surgical removal of the cancerous growth while preserving the maximum amount of healthy tissue that surrounds the tumor. In more developed cases of basal cell carcinoma, Mohs surgery might be followed by targeted chemotherapy or immunotherapy to ensure the elimination of any residual cancer cells. Radiation therapy is a common form of treatment when surgery is not possible or the patient declines the surgical option.

Taken together, basal cell carcinoma is the most common form of skin cancer which is typically caused by UV-induced DNA damage in skin cells located within the stratum basale layer of the epidermis. This form of cancer is very survivable because it is visually apparent on the surface of the skin thereby making it easy for an early diagnosis. In most cases, Mohs surgery is the recommended treatment option, a procedure that physically removes the tumor from the area of the skin while preserving the surrounding healthy tissue. It is common practice for skin cancer check-ups to occur more frequently following a basal cell carcinoma diagnosis.

Submit your **Cancer Answers** topics to info@CancerConsultantsOfAmerica.com

We Are Available to You

Please contact us today if you would like more information about how our services can benefit you and your family.

Services:

- Individual and Family Cancer Education
- Medical Appointment Liaison Services
- Information Seminars and Public Speaking Events

Fun Facts – August

Cancer Awareness Month:

Appendix Cancer (Amber) 

August 1 – National Girlfriend Day 

August 4 – National Night Out 

August 11 – National Hip-Hop Day 

August 15 – World Honey Bee Day 

August 23 – Cheap Flight Day 

August 30 – National Beach Day 

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