

SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA

Squamous Cell Carcinoma is a major type of cancer that arises from the outer epidermal layer of the skin and mucous membranes and occurs most commonly on areas exposed to the sun. If untreated, squamous cell carcinoma may penetrate and destroy underlying tissue. In a small percentage of cases, this tumor can spread (metastasize) to distant organs and may be fatal.

Chronic sun exposure is the leading cause of squamous cell carcinoma, especially in people with fair skin, light hair and blue, green or grey eyes.

Other factors that may contribute to the development of this cancer include burns, scars, exposure to radiation or chemicals, chronic inflammatory conditions and immunosuppression. Although more likely to develop in fair-skinned individuals, squamous cell carcinoma may occur in dark-skinned people, especially at sites of preexisting inflammatory conditions or burns.

Signs that may indicate the presence of squamous cell carcinoma include scaly red patches, elevated growth with a central depression, wart-like growths, nodules and open sores. All of these types of lesions may develop a crusted surface or bleed.

Treatment Options

After sections of tissue from a biopsy of your skin are assessed under a microscope by a dermatopathologist and determined to be squamous cell carcinoma, your dermatologist will recommend several treatment options. Your dermatologist's recommendation for therapy depends on the size, location and subtype of squamous cell carcinoma. Your age and general health are also taken into consideration. The more common treatment options include excisional surgery, electrosurgery, radiation therapy and Mohs Micrographic Surgery. Your dermatologist will discuss these treatment options with you.

How Can We Protect Ourselves?

Because chronic overexposure to sunlight is the leading cause of squamous cell carcinoma, sun avoidance, especially during peak sunlight hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., is an important preventive measure to help reduce the risk of developing this skin cancer.

Limit skin exposure to the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays by wearing sunglasses, broad-brimmed hats and protective, tightly woven clothing. Furthermore, use a broad-spectrum sunscreen, rated SPF-30 or higher, on all exposed skin, including the lips, even on cloudy days. Reapply sunscreen frequently. Additionally, avoid tanning parlors and artificial tanning devices.

Inspect your entire body regularly for any skin changes, especially those already mentioned, and routinely visit your dermatologist for a skin examination.



**DON'T BECOME
A STATISTIC**

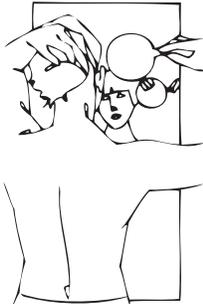
- Squamous cell carcinoma affects more than 250,000 Americans each year
- When completely treated, the cure rate is greater than 95 percent
- These lesions tend to occur more often in males than females

Source: 2010 American Cancer Society

What To Look For And How

Spotting changes in current moles and/or developing lesions early on can help prevent the development and spread of skin cancer. It is important to know what to look for and how to look for it when dealing with early skin cancer detection.

Every month, inspect your entire body for any skin changes and routinely visit your dermatologist for a complete skin examination. Early detection of melanoma can be lifesaving because this cancer may be curable in its early stages. Any irregularity in an existing or newly developed pigmented skin lesion could be a sign of melanoma and should be examined immediately by your dermatologist. These irregularities may include asymmetry, an uneven border, color variations, diameter of more than 6mm or evolving changes of the lesion – all of these irregularities are covered in the ABCDEs of melanoma. If you notice any of the following irregularities in current skin lesions, see a dermatologist immediately.

				
STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
Examine your body front and back in the mirror, then right and left sides, arms raised.	Bend elbows and look carefully at forearms and upper arms and palms.	Look at the backs of legs and feet, spaces between toes and soles.	Examine back of neck and scalp with a hand mirror. Part hair for a closer look at scalp.	Finally, check back and buttocks with a hand mirror.

Images and content provided by the American Academy of Dermatology



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To learn more about the services Dermpath Diagnostics provides and to obtain more information on common skin disorders, please visit us at

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