

THE WONDERS OF SKIN

KNOW YOUR MOLES

Moles are fleshy growths that are often elevated above the surface of the skin. Common benign moles are generally round and symmetrical. They have smooth even borders and are a uniform shade of brown.

Become familiar with your moles. Watch for any changes in their size, color, surface, sensation, bleeding, or ulceration. If a mole changes, grows, or bleeds, see a doctor.



GETTING BELOW THE SURFACE

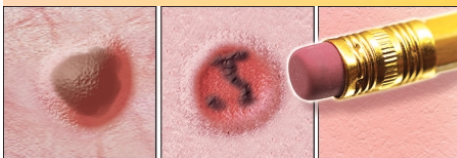
Develop a mini-presentation for your classmates on why skin cancer is the most common and fastest growing type of cancer in the United States.



ABCDs OF MELANOMA

Melanoma is a deadly skin cancer. Melanoma can appear suddenly as a new mole (fleshy growth), or it can develop slowly in or near an existing mole.

Periodic self-examination is the best way to catch melanoma at an early stage. Inspect the skin of your entire body under bright light, using a mirror to examine hard-to-see areas.



You can recognize melanoma if you learn these ABCDs. A lesion may be melanoma if:

- A** – its shape is **Asymmetrical**
- B** – **Border** is irregular or jagged
- C** – **Color** may be variegated, black, brown, red, or white
- D** – **Diameter** is greater than a pencil eraser head (5mm)

If you see any of the following, which may be signs of skin cancer or pre-cancer, see a doctor immediately.

- A skin growth that increases in size and looks pearly, translucent, tan, brown, black, red, pink, or multicolored.
- A mole that changes in color or in texture, becomes irregular in shape, or gets larger.
- A spot or growth that continues to itch, hurt, crust, scab, erode, or bleed.
- An open sore that lasts for more than 4 weeks, or heals and then reopens.
- A dry, rough, or scaly bump that may produce a pricking or tender sensation.

DR. DERM SAYS



Q. Dear Dr. Derm,

My best friend and I have the same birthday. We want to get our tongues pierced to celebrate. What do you think of body piercing?



A. Body piercing procedures may be painful and carry the risk of an allergic reaction, infection, hepatitis, ripping, scarring, or tearing of the skin. Infection is a common complication of mouth piercings, because millions of bacteria live in the mouth. Tongue piercings can cause chipped and broken teeth and gum problems. Some people have even choked on loose mouth jewelry.

In some states if you're under eighteen, you will need your parent's consent to get a piercing.

For more information about *The Wonders of Skin: Looking Good, Being Healthy* program, contact:

American Skin Association
346 Park Avenue South
4th Floor
New York, NY 10010
(212) 889-4858
(800) 499-SKIN
www.americanskin.org

THE WONDERS OF SKIN

LOOKING GOOD, BEING HEALTHY

FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

DR. DERM SAYS



Q. Dear Dr. Derm,

I'm a seventh grader. I think body tattoos are really cool. I want to get a large one on my ankle. What do you think?



A. Getting a tattoo can be painful and can cost a lot of money. Tattoos are permanent and not easy to remove. More than 50 percent of the people who get tattoos later try to remove them. So think about getting a removable temporary tattoo or a henna (plant dye) tattoo, which is much safer and not permanent.

GETTING BELOW THE SURFACE

Write a magazine or newspaper article in response to this thought-provoking question:



More than 50 percent of people who get tattoos eventually try to get them removed. Why do you think the percentage is so high? What's going on?

Q. Dear Dr. Derm,

My brother who is in high school has pimples all over his face and back. How can I make sure this doesn't happen to my skin?



A. It sounds like your brother has acne, a skin condition that can include whiteheads, blackheads, pimples, and cysts. Almost everyone between the ages of eleven and seventeen gets acne at some time. Two out of five teens get acne that is severe enough to require a doctor's treatment. Boys tend to get severe acne more frequently than girls.

Our skin is covered with tiny openings called hair follicles or pores. Sometimes a pore gets clogged with too much of an oily substance called sebum (pronounced *see-bum*). Or pores get clogged with dead skin cells and germs called bacteria. When this happens, it causes acne. Eating chocolate, chips, or junk food does not cause acne.

A lot of people think tanning helps dry up acne. Actually, tanning can clog oil glands and *cause* acne.

Acne is a condition that often persists, but can be treated with good results. Acne can be stopped!

Here are some steps you can take at home to establish a cleansing routine.

- Wash gently with mild soap and water. Too much rubbing can actually worsen acne.
- Shampoo regularly and keep hair off the face as much as possible to prevent oils from getting on the skin.

- Try over-the-counter skin products that have a drying agent (such as benzoyl peroxide).
- Don't pick, pop, or squeeze your pimples. This can injure your skin and underlying tissues and cause scarring.
- Carry individual packets of alcohol wipes to wipe away the extra oil when you get hot and sweaty.
- If your acne is of concern to you, see a doctor before it gets worse. Acne can be treated.

We know that having acne can affect your self-esteem, but remember—who you are as a person is far more important than your physical appearance.

GETTING BELOW THE SURFACE

Write an entry in your journal in response to these thought-provoking questions:



Why do you think there is so much focus on physical appearances? What could you say to a friend who has acne to help build her or his self-esteem?

Dr. Derm Says is continued on the last page.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

This magazine provides general information about an array of skin health issues. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult a doctor.

For more information on the above topics, visit www.kidshealth.org

HOW WELL DO YOU PROTECT YOUR SKIN?

QUESTION	NAMES			POINTS
How often do you use at least SPF-15 sunscreen to protect your skin from the sun?	never			0
	occasionally			1
	most of the time			2
	always			3
How often do you wear a hat to protect your skin from the sun?	never			0
	occasionally			1
	most of the time			2
	always			3
How often do you wear long-sleeved shirts and pants to protect your skin?	never			0
	occasionally			1
	most of the time			2
	always			3
How likely are you to sunbathe, swim, play, or work in the sun between 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M.?	never			3
	occasionally			2
	most of the time			1
	always			0
How often do you tan at a tanning parlor?	never			3
	occasionally			2
	most of the time			1
	always			0
How many times have you gotten a sunburn in your life?	never			3
	occasionally			2
	most of the time			1
	always			0
TOTALS				

- Interview some members of your family. Write the number of points each person receives for their responses in the column with his or her name.
- Add up each person's total points for the six questions. Depending on the number of points each person receives, present that person with a "Because I Care" note. We've included some suggestions but please feel free to create notes and personalize them for your family.

If the individual's score totals 18 points, you can write a note like this:

Dear (Name of Family Member),
I'm so proud of you! Your answers to the questions reveal that you do a good job of protecting your skin.
Love, (Your Name)

If the individual's total score is between 13–17 points, you can write a message like this:

Dear (Name of Family Member),
I want you to know that you're doing a good job of protecting your skin from the sun, but you still need a little sun safety awareness training. I can help.
Love, (Your Name)

If the individual's total score is between 7–12 points, you can write a message like this:

Dear (Name of Family Member),
Your answers to the interview questions reveal that you need to pay more attention to protecting your skin from the sun's harmful rays. Let's work on this together!
Love, (Your Name)

If the individual's total score is between 0–6 points, you can write a message like this:

Dear (Name of Family Member),
Your responses to the interview questions seriously concern me. How can I help you change your habits when you are in the sun? Let's talk!
Love, (Your Name)

- Create an action plan to help your family members be more sun-safe.

SUN SAFETY FACTS

- Skin cancer, caused by too much ultraviolet radiation from the sun, tanning beds, and sun lamps, is the most common and the fastest growing cancer in the United States.
- Any severe sunburn before the age of eighteen dramatically increases a person's chances of developing melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.
- One in six Americans will develop skin cancer.

SUN SAFETY TIPS

- Stay in the shade whenever you can.
- Minimize sun exposure between 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M.
- Generously apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or higher.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours when outdoors, even on cloudy days, and reapply immediately after swimming or strenuous activities.
- Wear a hat that shades your face and neck and clothing that covers your body.
- Wear UV-protective sunglasses to protect your eyes.
- Avoid reflective surfaces such as sand, water, snow, and concrete, which can reflect up to 85 percent of the sun's damaging rays.
- Avoid tanning parlors.



TRUE OR FALSE?

Read these myths. Myths are popular beliefs that are untrue. Draw a line from each myth to the correct fact. We've done a sample for you.

Myth 1: Getting a tan at a tanning salon is safer than tanning in the sun.

Myth 2: Only people with fair skin are at risk for skin cancer.

Myth 3: People look healthier when they have a tan.

Myth 4: There are no risks in getting a body piercing.

Myth 5: A person needs to be in the sun for a long time for the body to make vitamin D.

Myth 6: Tanning helps dry up acne.

Myth 7: Melanoma is a benign mole.

Myth 8: Tattoo removal is easy and inexpensive.

Fact A: There is no such thing as a healthy tan. The sun can cause wrinkles, spots, sagging, premature aging, and skin cancer.

Fact B: Everyone is at risk for skin cancer, no matter what color your skin is.

Fact C: Tanning can clog oil glands and cause acne.

Fact D: Exposure to radiation in tanning parlors is as dangerous as exposure to sun.

Fact E: Tattoo removal can be painful and costly.

Fact F: Only ten minutes of sunlight a day is needed for the body to manufacture all the vitamin D a person needs.

Fact G: Body piercing carries the risk of allergic reactions, infections, hepatitis, and ripping or scarring of the skin.

Fact H: Melanoma is a deadly skin cancer.

Answer Key: 1D, 2B, 3A, 4G, 5E, 6C, 7H, 8E.

MAKING SUN PROTECTION A HABIT

Together as a family, adopt sun protection habits. Develop a skit, television advertisement, brochure, or poster to educate your family, neighbors and other community members about sun protection.



Here are some Websites to help you with your research.

- www.americanskin.org
- www.skincancer.org
- www.cdc.gov/chooseyourcover
- www.epa.gov/sunwise/kids.html