

Prevention

Early Detection of Skin Cancer

Early detection is one of the most significant steps in successfully treating skin cancer, and the best way to do that is regular monthly self skin examinations and at least yearly examinations by a dermatologist. Catching cancers early can be life-saving as well as minimize the surgical intervention and reconstruction needed for removal.

Self Examinations:

- Perform your exam once a month
- Remember to get into your birthday suit and look at your whole body including non-sun exposed areas
- Use a full length mirror. Use another mirror to see your backside
- Use a well lit room
- Learn the patterns of your own moles, blemishes, freckles, and other marks on your skin so that you'll notice any changes
- What to look for:
 - New mole
 - Changing mole – change in shape, symmetry or color
 - Irregular moles – irregular in shape and/or have multiple colors
 - Pimples that don't go away – pimples heal after 6 weeks, cancers do not
 - Repeated bleeding in the same location with little or no trauma
 - Rough and scaly bumps or patches
- **Self Exams Saves Lives!**
 - 57% of newly diagnosed melanoma patients first spotted their own melanomas by skin self-exams
 - Studies show people who perform skin self-exams have thinner, less advanced melanomas
 - Earlier detection of melanoma can reduce mortality by as much as 63%

Professional Skin Examinations:

- Once a year, a head to toe examination should be done by a dermatologist and more often if one has a significant history of skin cancer
 - Studies show physicians are also more likely to detect melanomas at a thinner, earlier stage than non-physicians
 - Most melanomas (56%) detected in a general dermatology practice setting were found as a result of dermatologist-initiated total-body skin exams and were not mentioned by the patient as a reason for a visit

Remember to point out areas of concern to us!