



## Disease Management: Melanoma

### What Is Melanoma?

Melanoma is cancer of the pigment-forming cells of the skin (melanocytes). The cancer develops when the melanocytes change and reproduce abnormally because of overexposure to ultraviolet light.

### Symptoms

Melanoma may appear on any skin surface, and typically looks like a single dark spot on the skin frequently on the arms, back and/or legs.

Consult your doctor if any of the following occur:

- You have a mole that changes (size, shape, or color), itches, oozes, bleeds, or is ulcerated.
- Your skin changes color.
- You have new moles that grow near an existing mole.

### Treatment

The first treatment for all stages of melanoma is surgery to remove the visible tumor and surrounding skin. Additional treatment, including chemotherapy, radiation therapy, immunotherapy and drugs may also be necessary, depending on the stage of the melanoma.

### Prevention

To reduce your risk of melanoma, stay out of the sun as much as possible. If you are spending time in the sun, be sure to take these precautions:

- Apply generous amounts of sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher).
- Wear protective sunglasses and a broad-brimmed hat.
- Avoid the peak hours of sun intensity, which are between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Lounge under an umbrella or canopy if you're at the beach.

It's also a good idea to do a skin self-exam every couple of months to ensure that you find suspicious moles early (see "Symptoms" above).

### Online Resources

For more information on melanoma treatment and prevention, search these useful Web sites:

- National Cancer Institute (NCI)  
[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)
- American Cancer Society (ACS)  
[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)
- Cancer Research Institute  
[www.cancerresearch.org](http://www.cancerresearch.org)
- Melanoma.com (operated by Schering Corporation and its selected technology partners)  
[www.melanoma.com](http://www.melanoma.com)