

Many people want to know if their moles are "okay." What do we look for if moles change? Here are some hints and reminders about moles that may help you:

- ⊗ The average person has 40-100 moles.
- ⊗ The more moles you have, the more necessary it is to check them carefully.
- ⊗ If "funny looking" or oddly shaped moles run in your family, you must be checked more frequently.
- ⊗ You should not be getting new moles after age 25.
- ⊗ A moles doesn't have to be raised to be a mole. It can start out flat and look like a freckle.
- ⊗ Birthmarks and moles that were present at birth need to be checked throughout life.
- ⊗ If moles have hair in them, it doesn't mean they are either safe or dangerous.
- ⊗ Stress and illness, as well as pregnancy, can make moles change.

Melanomas are abnormal or malignant skin cancers that

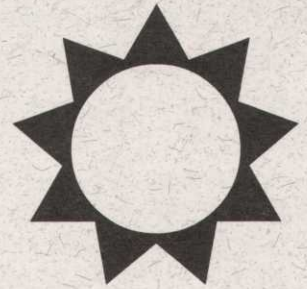
can spread throughout the body from a mole that has changed.

The Melanoma Danger Signs

- ⊗ Sudden change in size is of concern. This can happen in weeks, but it can be slower.

nodule.

- ⊗ Changes in shape or outline. Nature makes things even and symmetrical. When the borders or edges are irregular and notched, we want to know.
- ⊗ Changes in sensation. Feeling an "electrical"



SKIN CONCERNS FROM SUN EXPOSURE

by Dennis M. Nigro, M.D.

- ⊗ Change in color. Can be multiple colors, brown to black, red, white or blue. It can have a white ring around it called a Halo Nevus. All these require biopsy.

- ⊗ Changes in surface. Scaly, flaky, crusted, ulceration, bleeding, hard lump or

sensation, tenderness, pain or itching.

- ⊗ Sudden appearance of a mole in an area where there was not one before.

We cannot always tell if you have a melanoma just from looking. If you have several symptoms, you may

need a biopsy. If there are abnormal cells present, further surgery may be required. The earlier a melanoma is found, the better your survival rate.

Prevention of Melanoma

Use a 15+ sunscreen or sunblock outdoors. Do not go to tanning salons. Avoid sunburn at all costs! Avoid exposure to the sun between 11:00am and 2:00pm. Remember that the sun is at its strongest in May when it takes less than one hour to burn. Higher elevations increase the sun's strength. The immune system becomes depressed with sunlight. Be smart, be knowledgeable -- live longer!

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