

How should I check my moles?

Information for
patients



People with many moles are at increased risk of Melanoma skin cancer. It is important to try and get to know your skin and what is normal for you.

Here are some practical tips on how best to check your moles:

- 1.** Make sure you do your skin check where there is good lighting. Using a full length mirror and hand held mirror can be helpful.
- 2.** Use baseline photographs to act as a reference point to do the skin check against. These may be medical photographs that you have been sent by your doctor, or they can be photos that you have taken yourself. Keep these in a safe place.
- 3.** Ask a partner or friend to help you do the skin check, especially to look in places that you will have difficulty checking such as your back and scalp. Tell them that you want them to “spot the difference” against the photos. Also look in less obvious places like your palms, soles of your feet, nails and between your toes.
- 4.** Look for any new lesions or moles that have appeared. These may be more worrying particularly if growing and if they stand out from the crowd - that is they look different to other moles on your skin. Don't forget that moles can look pink as well as brown.

5. Checking regularly is important so you can work out when the change has occurred. We recommend you put a reminder on your calendar on a regular date to help you do this. We recommend doing this formal skin check against photographs at least every three months.

Compared to your baseline photographs:

- **Has it changed in shape?** Check for irregularity.
- **Has it changed in size?** Is your mole growing? Use a ruler to help you measure.
- **Has it changed in colour?** Does it have more than one colour? Has it become red and inflamed around the edge or crusty? It can be concerning if moles start to bleed or ooze spontaneously.

Normal moles can sometimes change slowly but do report any changes to your doctor so they can assess it.



What did you think of your care?

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© The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust • 1st edition (Ver 1)
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LN005286
Publication date
05/2023
Review date
05/2026