

## Protect your skin

- Both types of skin cancer are strongly linked to overexposure to UV rays
- UV rays from the sun can damage your skin through cloud, windows and even when it doesn't feel warm outside. Between April and September UV levels in Northern Ireland can be high enough to cause skin damage. Check the daily UV index at [metoffice.gov.uk/uv](http://metoffice.gov.uk/uv)
- Episodes of sunburn, especially in childhood, also increase your risk
- Never allow your skin to burn
- Don't use sunbeds
- Those who burn easily, or spend significant time outdoors through work, sport or hobbies are at more risk so need to be particularly careful



Stay in the shade between 11am and 3pm



Cover up



Wear sunglasses with 100% UV protection



Wear a broad-brim hat



Use sun protection with at least SPF 15 and UVA 4 stars

If you have any concerns about cancer call **Cancer Focus Northern Ireland's Freephone Nurseline**

**0800 783 3339**

Monday to Friday 9am - 1pm

Calls are free from a landline

[nurseline@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:nurseline@cancerfocusni.org)

For further information visit:  
**[www.careinthesun.org](http://www.careinthesun.org)**



**Public Health Agency**

**Public Health Agency**  
12-22 Linenhall Street  
Belfast BT2 8BS

T: 0300 555 0114 (local rate)  
[www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net)



**Cancer Focus Northern Ireland**  
40-44 Eglantine Avenue  
Belfast BT9 6DX

T: 028 9066 3281  
E: [info@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:info@cancerfocusni.org)  
[www.cancerfocusni.org](http://www.cancerfocusni.org)

Charity No: NIC 101307



# Skin cancer

**what you need to know**



## Skin cancer: what you need to know

Spotting anything new on your skin or a change in a mole or a spot can help save your life.

Skin cancer is very common in Northern Ireland (over 30% of all cancers) and is usually caused by exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun or sunbeds.

Skin cancer can be divided into two types: **melanoma** and **non-melanoma** skin cancers.

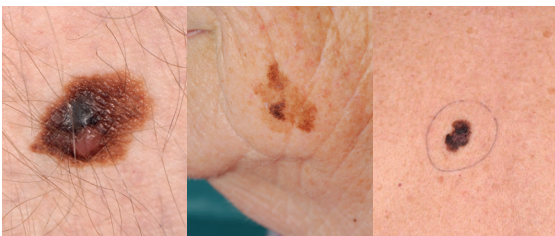
**Melanoma** can develop in an existing mole or can appear as a new mole. This is the least common form of skin cancer but the most dangerous as it can spread to other parts of the body.

If you notice any changes in the size, shape or colour of a longstanding mole, or if you notice a new blue, brown or black mole it should be urgently checked by your GP. Any new itching, pain or crusting of a mole should also be checked out.

### NORMAL MOLES



### MELANOMAS



## ABCDE mole check

It's important to be aware of any changes to your skin. Here's what to keep an eye on:



### Asymmetry

The shape of one half is different to the other



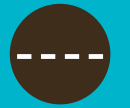
### Border

Irregular blurring of border or ragged edge



### Colour

Two or more colours: different shades of brown, or the presence of black, red or blue alongside the mole's normal colour



### Diameter

Any change in size



### Expert

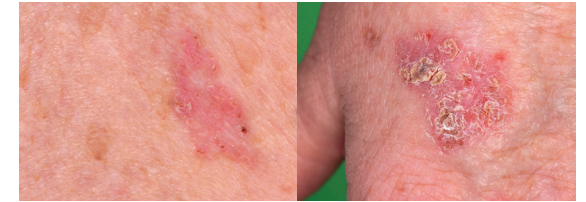
If in doubt get it checked out by your GP

**Non-melanoma** skin cancers usually appear gradually and can vary greatly in appearance, for example:

- A persistent rough, scaly patch of skin that may be flat or raised
- A lump or ulcer which could be red, pink or flesh coloured
- A lump or bump that shows any of the following features should be seen urgently by your GP: growing rapidly, painful or bleeding.

If you have noticed any of these changes you should contact your GP. These skin cancers can occur anywhere on the body but often on areas of skin that are most exposed to the sun for example, the head, neck and ears.

### EARLY SIGNS OF NON-MELANOMA SKIN CANCER



### NON-MELANOMA SKIN CANCERS



**Skin cancer can kill, but if detected early, most skin cancers can be successfully treated.**

## Check your skin regularly

**Check the skin all over your body regularly (ideally once a month):**

- Use mirrors or ask a friend to look at your back, the backs of your legs and all the areas you can't easily see yourself
- Don't forget the soles of your feet, between your toes, your scalp, neck and nails
- Look for anything that is inflamed, growing, bleeding, crusting, red around the edges, particularly itchy or painful, or changing in any way
- **Seek the advice of your GP if you notice any mole changes, new moles or abnormal skin changes**