

ABCDEs of Melanoma

A Guide to Spotting Melanoma



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These basic guidelines are used by many dermatologists to help identify melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.

Catching melanoma early could mean the difference between life and a life-threatening cancer. Knowing what to look for and performing regular self-skin exams may help you become more aware of unusual spots that should be brought to the attention of a dermatologist.

If you notice an unusual spot or a spot that has one or more of these characteristics, make an appointment with a dermatologist – preferably one who has experience with melanoma.

	A – Asymmetrical Shape Melanoma lesions are often irregular, or not symmetrical, in shape. Benign moles are usually symmetrical.
	B – Border Typically, non-cancerous moles have smooth, even borders. Melanoma lesions usually have irregular borders that are difficult to define.
	C – Color The presence of more than one color (blue, black, brown, tan, etc.) or the uneven distribution of color can sometimes be a warning sign of melanoma. Benign moles are usually a single shade of brown or tan.
	D – Diameter Melanoma lesions are often greater than 6 millimeters in diameter (about the size of a pencil eraser).
E	E – Evolution (or Change) The evolution of your mole(s) has become the most important factor to consider when it comes to diagnosing a melanoma . Knowing what is normal for YOU could save your life.

***It is important to note that not all melanomas fall within these parameters.**