

Melanoma

Also called: malignant melanoma

The most serious type of skin cancer.

Common

More than 200,000 US cases per year



Treatable by a medical professional



Requires a medical diagnosis



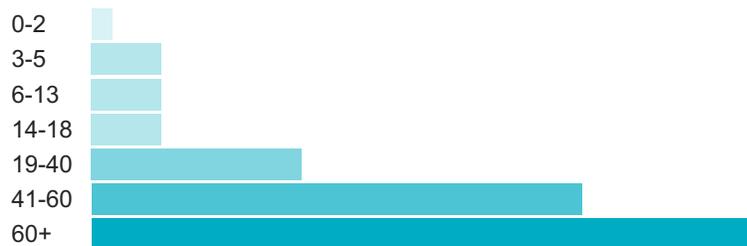
Lab tests or imaging often required

Melanoma occurs when the pigment-producing cells that give color to the skin become cancerous.

Symptoms might include a new, unusual growth or a change in an existing mole. Melanomas can occur anywhere on the body.

Treatment may involve surgery, radiation, medications, or in some cases chemotherapy.

Ages affected



Symptoms

Requires a medical diagnosis

Symptoms might include a new, unusual growth or a change in an existing mole. Melanomas can occur anywhere on the body.

People may experience:

Common symptoms: bigger mole diameter, darkening of the skin, mole color changes, or skin mole with irregular border

Treatments

Treatment depends on stage

Treatment may involve surgery, radiation, medications, or in some cases chemotherapy.

Medical procedure

Radiation therapy: Treatment that uses x-rays and other high-energy rays to kill

abnormal cells.

Mohs surgery: Surgical removal of skin cancer, one layer at a time, until only healthy tissue is left.

Surgery

Skin grafting: Surgically removing skin from one part of the body and transplanting it to another part. For example, to treat a serious burn or wound.

Wide local excision: Surgical removal of a small area of cancerous or precancerous tissue, along with a margin of normal tissue.

Medications

Antiviral drug: Reduces viruses' ability to replicate.

- Interferon alfa-2b (Intron A)

Chemotherapy: Kills cells that are growing or multiplying too quickly.

- Vemurafenib (Zelboraf)
- Dabrafenib (Tafinlar)

Specialists

Primary care provider (PCP): Prevents, diagnoses, and treats diseases.

Plastic surgeon: Reconstructs defective, damaged, or missing body parts.

Surgeon: Performs operations to treat disease.

Oncologist: Specializes in cancer.

Dermatologist: Focuses on disorders of skin, nails, and hair.

Consult a doctor for medical advice

Note: The information you see describes what usually happens with a medical condition, but doesn't apply to everyone. This information isn't medical advice, so make sure to contact a healthcare provider if you have a medical problem. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or a emergency number immediately.

Sources: Mayo Clinic and others. [Learn more](#)