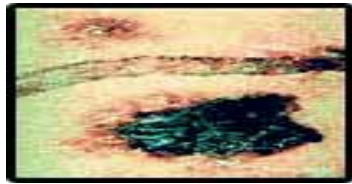


# Melanoma

## 10 Important Questions To Ask Your Doctor About Melanoma:

1. How far has my cancer spread?  
How did you determine that?
2. What are my chances for beating this disease?
3. Can you remove all of the cancer through surgery alone?
4. If I need any treatments besides surgery, what do you recommend and why?
5. What side effects can I expect from my treatments? How should I handle them?
6. How long will I need these treatments?
7. Will my surgery leave a noticeable scar? Is there a way to minimize scarring?
8. Am I at high risk for a return of Melanoma? What should I do to prevent a recurrence?
9. Am I at high risk for other types of skin cancer?
10. What should I do if I see another suspicious mole? How often should I see you for follow-up? Will you need to take photographs?



### **BORDER IRREGULARITY**

Edge is ragged, irregular, or poorly defined.



**Thanks  
Mariana Frisell Designs  
For Becoming The Next  
Chapter In The Fight  
Against Cancer!**

# "WHY ME?"

*The  
Antigua & Barbuda  
Cancer Society  
Nellie Robinson Street  
562-6295/764-2561  
whymeoutmail@yahoo.com*

## **ABCDs of Skin Changes**



### **ASYMMETRY**

**One half doesn't match the other**

# A B C Ds OF SKIN CHANGES



## COLOR VARIATION

Colour changes from area to another and may includes of shades of tan, brown, black, white, red or blue.

### What is Melanoma?

Melanoma is a form of skin cancer that starts in the pigment-producing skin cells called melanocytes. These cells become abnormal, grow uncontrollably, and aggressively invade surrounding tissues. Although melanoma is less common than other types of skin cancer, it is the most serious. Fortunately, melanoma may be cured if caught in its early stages when it affects only the skin. In advanced stages, it may spread, or metastasize, through the blood or lymph system to other organs and bones, making cure less likely.

### What causes Melanoma?

Melanoma often is caused by too much sun exposure. Damage to the genetic material (DNA) of melanocytes from sun exposure and UV light radiation is a major cause of melanoma.

Melanoma can also be caused by other factors, including a family history of melanoma and the presence of abnormal, or atypical, moles. Although atypical moles are not cancerous, their presence is a sign of an inherited tendency to develop melanoma.

### What are the symptoms?

The most important sign of melanoma is a change in a mole or other skin growth, such as a birthmark. Any change in the shape, size or color of a mole may indicate melanoma. Melanoma usually looks like a flat, brown or black mole that has irregular, uneven borders, and is not symmetrical. Melanoma skin growths may be 6mm (0.2 in) or larger. A melanoma may be lumpy or rounded, change color, become crusty, ooze, or bleed.



Regular Border

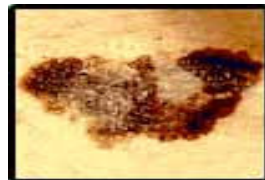


Irregular Border

Melanoma can develop in an existing mole or other mark on the skin, but it often develops in unmarked skin. Mostly upper back of men and legs of women.

### How is melanoma diagnosed?

Your health professional will examine your skin to look



## DIAMETER LARGER

Usually larger than a pencil eraser; more than 5 millimetre in diameter.

for melanoma. If he or she suspects melanoma, a biopsy of the affected skin is needed to make a diagnosis. If the biopsy shows melanoma, more testing may be necessary to determined if the cancer has spread.

### How Is Melanoma treated?

Melanomas detected at an early stage have the best chance for cure. Surgical removal, or excision, of the melanoma is the most effective treatment. Surgical removal may be all that is needed for early melanomas that have not spread or metastasized to other parts of the body.

### How can I prevent melanoma?

- ◆ Use sunscreen w/SPF of 15
- ◆ Wear protective clothing outdoors including a wide brimmed hat
- ◆ Stay out of sun during the midday (10:00 am to 3:00 pm)
- ◆ Avoid sunbathing & tanning salons. Artificial UV rays are just as dangerous.
- ◆ Set a good example for your children.

*"Why Me?"*