

SKIN CANCER INFORMATION



Marie Keating

FOUNDATION

making cancer less frightening by enlightening

THE SIMPLE FACTS ABOUT SKIN CANCER

What are the types of skin cancer?

Cancer can develop in the cells of the skin. Skin cancers are named after the type of cell they start from. Basal cell cancer (BCC) and squamous cell cancer (SCC) are the two most common types of skin cancer. They are sometimes called non-melanoma skin cancer because they don't develop from melanocytic cells. The third type of skin cancer is melanoma which begins in the melanocytes (tanning cells).

Basal cell carcinoma

- Accounts for 70-85% of all skin cancers
- It is most common in people aged over forty
- It is slow growing
- It can be a patch of skin which is red, pale or pearly in colour
- It usually appears in the head, neck and upper body
- It can grow deeper into the skin

Squamous cell carcinoma

- Accounts for 10-20% of all skin cancers
- Squamous cell carcinoma is most common in people over the age of fifty
- It is faster growing than basal cell carcinoma.
- It can appear as a lump or non healing ulcer on the skin, and can be thickened or scaly
- It usually appears in the head, neck arms and forearms
- It can spread to other parts of the body

Melanoma skin cancer

- Accounts for 5% of skin cancer cases but 75% of skin cancer deaths
- It is the most serious type of skin cancer and early detection is vital for successful treatment

What are the symptoms of melanoma skin cancer?

- Early skin changes include increase in size and shape of a pigmented lesion
- Late skin changes include tenderness, bleeding and ulceration

Risk factors and causes of skin cancer

Ultraviolet light (UVA and UVB) from the sun is the main environmental cause of most skin cancers. It is likely that most damage from ultraviolet light occurs before the age of twenty, but doesn't show up until many years later.

Damage to the skin below the age of twenty is an important risk factor in the development of skin cancer.

Skin cancer is becoming more common and there are several possible reasons for this.

People are living longer and so their lifetime sun exposure is greater.

Another reason why skin cancers appear more common is because awareness has increased over the last twenty years.

What are the risk factors?

- White skin that never tans, always burns
- White skin that burns initially and tans with difficulty
- A larger number of moles (greater than fifty)
- Sun exposure-both the total amount over time and acute burns
- Sun beds
- Family history of melanoma
- Pale skin, fair hair, blue eyes, freckles

How is skin cancer diagnosed?

Look for the signs

ABCDE's – look at the danger signs in moles and pigmented spots

Asymmetry – one half unlike the other

Border – scalloped or poorly defined border

Colour – variety from one area to another, shades of red or brown

Diameter – larger than 6mm as a general rule

Elevation – raised

Evolution – change in a mole or a changing new mole

Some examples of skin cancers



Image kindly provided by Cancer Research UK

What are the skin cancer facts?

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland. 80-90% of all cases of skin cancer are caused by the UV rays of the sun which are present even on a cloudy day in Ireland.

What prevention methods should I take?

It is never too late to start protecting your skin. Be sun safe every day, not just at the beach or in the garden.

- Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day (12noon-4pm)
- Protect face and neck with wide brimmed hat
- Use a high sun protection factor (SPF) and reapply frequently
- Never allow your skin to burn
- Do not use sunbeds
- Protect children's skin from an early age
- Check your skin regularly
- Consult your doctor if you notice any skin changes

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How do I check myself?

Check your arms and hands

- Hold your hands with the palms face up, look at your fingers and the spaces between the fingers
- Turn your hands over and examine the backs of your hands, fingers, spaces between the fingers and fingernails

Check your torso, front, back and sides

- With your back towards a full length mirror, look at your buttocks, the backs of your thighs and lower legs
- Face the mirror and look at your forearms, upper arms, front of your thighs and lower legs

Check your legs and feet

- Sit down and cross one leg over the other. Examine the top of your foot, toes toenails and spaces between the toes. Look at the sole or bottom of both feet

Check your face, head and neck

- Examine the scalp by parting the hair
- Check your whole face using a mirror, use a hand held mirror to check the back of your neck and ears

If you are in any doubt or if you notice any skin changes please consult your doctor.



Who we are

Following their mother Marie's death in 1998 Ronan Keating and each member of the Keating family promised that they would do everything they could to bring an end to breast cancer. They committed to provide all women and their families with the necessary information to prevent cancer or detect it at its earliest stages. Their collective aim was "**making cancer less frightening by enlightening**". The Marie Keating Foundation is the realisation of a family's dedication- it is a promise to themselves in action.

Through its community information service our Foundation's dedicated nurses continue to enlighten people on the causes and risk factors of cancer. The Foundation is continuing to expand its awareness campaigns on each of the key cancers, at local level through its community outreach approach as well as through national campaigns.

The Foundation finances other area of need in cancer care. Monies raised to help refurbish hospital Oncology waiting rooms in making them more comfortable for patients. A limited comfort fund for those in financial difficulty as a result of their illness provides immediate assistance when required.

The Foundation is committed to raising awareness among young people in schools of cancer and its prevention and to this end, has successfully developed a Cancer Awareness Programme for schools which is delivered to all second level senior cycle students.

The Marie Keating Foundation is well established and faces a wealth of opportunities and claims on its services and resources.



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