



# TIP SHEET

# Melanoma

## What You Need to Know

Melanoma is a potentially deadly type of skin cancer. Less common than either *basal cell* or *squamous cell* skin cancers, **melanoma** is more dangerous because it's more likely to spread, making treatment challenging.

More than  
**76,000**  
new melanoma  
cases are expected  
this year.

## PRACTICE SUN SAFETY

A healthy tan is a myth. Tanned skin is damaged skin. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is what tans, burns and damages your skin. Damaged skin cells lead to skin cancers, cataracts, eyelid cancers and premature skin aging and wrinkling.

- ✓ **Avoid tanning**, outdoors as well as tanning beds, booths and sunlamps.
- ✓ **Apply sunscreen daily** at least 30 minutes before sun exposure and on cloudy days, too.
- ✓ **Seek shade** during the sun's most intense hours between 10 am and 4 pm.
- ✓ **Use a broad spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen** with SPF of at least 30. Choose a water-resistant formula and reapply every two hours, and more frequently after swimming or sweating.
- ✓ **Cover up** with protective clothing including a broad-brimmed hat.
- ✓ **Shade your eyes** with sunglasses that filter UV rays.



## What Melanoma Looks Like

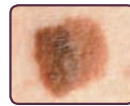
Melanoma may begin in a mole or on skin that was previously clear. Have a physician check any mole or pigmented area that shows one or more of the following ABCDE characteristics:



**Asymmetry.** One half does not match the other half.



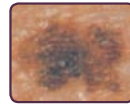
**Border** is irregular. The mole's edges are ragged, notched or blurred.



**Color** is uneven. Mole may appear shades of black, brown, tan, red, gray, white, pink or blue.



**Diameter** is larger than 6 millimeters (mm) or ¼ inch, about the size of a pencil eraser. Any sudden or continued increase in size is of special concern.



**Evolving.** The mole or lesion is changing in size, shape or color.

## Risk Factors

- **Fair complexion**, including skin that freckles and burns easily; blue, green or light-colored eyes; and red or blond hair
- **History of significant sun exposure** from spending a lot of time in the sun, working outdoors, sunbathing, or living (or once lived) in an area with intense sunlight.
- **History of severe, blistering sunburns**, especially as a child or teen.
- **History of tanning bed or sunlamp use**, even if only a few times.
- **Personal or family history** of melanoma
- **Moles** that are numerous, large, or unusual looking
- **Weakened immune system**



# Why Roswell Park Cancer Institute?

**Nationally recognized.** RPCI is a National Cancer Institute (NCI) designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, the only one in New York State outside of New York City.

**The only cancer center** in Western New York that offers regional chemotherapy treatments.

**A multidisciplinary care approach** by a team of dermatologists and surgical, medical and radiation oncologists who work together all under one roof.

**Access to clinical trials** offering the latest therapies.

**Convenient satellite locations.** Skin cancer patients may receive some of their care at our centers in Amherst and Niagara Falls, NY.

## Meet the Doctors

(above from left to right)

### Dermatology

- 1) Ilene L. Rothman, MD
- 2) Bethany Lema, MD
- 3) Gyorgy Paragh, MD, PhD

### Dermatopathology

- 4) Paul Bogner, MD
- 5) Richard Cheney, MD

### Surgical Oncology

- 6) Valerie Francescutti, MD, FRCSC
- 7) John Kane III, MD, FACS
- 8) Joseph Skitzki, MD

### Head and Neck Surgery

- 9) David Cohan, MD
- 10) Vishal Gupta, MD
- 11) Wesley Hicks, Jr., MD, FACS

### Medical Oncology

- 12) Nikhil I. Khushalani, MD
- 13) Amy Early, MD, FACP

### Radiation Oncology

- 14) Kilian Salerno, MD

### Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

- 15) Hassan Arshad, MD
- 16) Cemile Nurdan Ozturk, MD
- 17) Paul Tomljanovich, MD

When melanoma is found and treated early, the cure rate is almost **100%**

Indoor tanning raises the risk of melanoma more than **50%**

Some common medications increase skin's susceptibility to UV damage.

## Treatment the RPCI Way

- **Specialized skin surgery** to remove cancerous tissue while preserving healthy tissue.
- **Immunotherapy** that boosts immune system's ability to destroy cancer cells or keep them from growing.
- **Targeted therapies** that zero in on genetic characteristics of the cancer cell.
- **Plastic and reconstructive surgeons** to restore or improve appearance and function of important skin structures.

