

FACT SHEET 1

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world About 1200 people die from skin cancer in Australia each year, 80% from melanoma

The majority of skin cancers are caused as a direct result of frequent and prolonged exposure to the sun, about 90% of skin cancers are found on exposed areas such as the hands and face. Outdoor workers have a high risk of developing skin cancer:

There are three main types of skin cancer:

- 1. Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC)**
is the most common type; it is usually very small, doesn't spread inside the body and is usually not fatal. The most common areas affected are the central face, nose and eyelids.
- 2. Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC)**
rarely spreads to other parts of the body and is seldom fatal. However, it can leave bad scars if is not treated early. This cancer develops rapidly and is less common than BCC.
- 3. Malignant Melanoma (MM)**
is the most dangerous form of skin cancer. If not detected early and treated properly, it can spread to other parts of the body. It can grow on places that have not been exposed to the sun - even under toe nails and on the soles of the feet.

Skin cancer is usually treated by being surgically removed. The earlier the detection and treatment, the less likely that unsightly scarring and disfigurement will result. In particular, the importance of early diagnosis of melanoma cannot be overemphasised.

Prevention is better than cure

Prevention and protection

There are many ways to protect yourself from the sun when you need to work outside. It is very important to take into account the following factors:

- 1. Limit Exposure**
The intensity of the sun's rays is at its greatest between 10 am and 2 pm (from 11 am to 3 pm

during daylight saving). Work practices should be modified to avoid any unnecessary exposure to ultra-violet radiation during these times. Nonetheless, remember that skin protection is important all year round - not just in summertime.

- 2. Wear Protective Clothing**

Employers should provide suitable protective clothing for outside workers. Loose, long sleeved shirts or blouses with a collar and long trousers or slacks to protect arms and legs. A hat with an 8cm wide brim or a cap with flaps.

- 3. Wear Sunscreen**

Employers should also provide a suitable sunscreen of at least SPF 15+ to protect those areas of skin still exposed to the sun. 15+ means that this type of sunscreen will give at least 15 times the protection that the skin would give. It should be applied to dry clean skin before exposure to the sun and thickly reapplied when you have been in the sun for more than 2 hours. You should still cover-up with protective clothing.

Workers who are regularly exposed to the sun should be warned about the potential hazards and advised on how to avoid exposure. Outdoor workers need to be clearly aware of the fact that every time they go out into the sun, they are a target for skin cancer. The effect of exposure is cumulative and is not reversible - the damage adds up until some years later when cancers start to appear.

It is very important to check for:


- Any new freckle, mole, sunspot or unhealed sore on your skin.
- A spot that looks different from the other spots around it.
- A spot that has changed in colour, size or shape over the last few weeks or months.


Remember: No matter what type of skin you have you are at risk of developing skin cancer.

These are only a guide, if you have any type of mole or lump that has drawn your attention please see your Doctor as soon as possible.

Skin cancer generally **stands out as being quite different** to surrounding skin. If a spot strikes you as being a bit odd, it probably is!

Skin cancer mostly appears as a new and unusual looking spot. It may also appear as an existing spot that has changed in colour, size or shape.

Basal cell carcinoma	Squamous cell carcinoma	Melanoma	Nodular melanoma
			
<p>Basal cell carcinoma</p> <p>Basal cell carcinoma or BCC is the most common type of skin cancer. It grows slowly over months and years and may damage nearby tissues and organs if left untreated.</p> <p>BCC and SCC are often grouped together and called non-melanoma or common skin cancers.</p>			

Basal cell carcinoma	Squamous cell carcinoma	Melanoma	Nodular melanoma
			
<p>Squamous cell carcinoma</p> <p>Squamous cell carcinoma or SCC is less common but grows faster. It may spread to other parts of the body if left untreated.</p>			

Basal cell carcinoma	Squamous cell carcinoma	Melanoma	Nodular melanoma
			
<p>Melanoma</p> <p>Melanoma is the least common but most dangerous type of skin cancer. Most skin cancer deaths are from melanoma.</p> <p>It can appear as a new spot or an existing spot that changes size, shape or colour. Melanoma has an uneven, smudgy outline and will be an irregular mix of colours.</p>			

Basal cell carcinoma	Squamous cell carcinoma	Melanoma	Nodular melanoma	
				
<p>Nodular melanoma</p> <p>A very aggressive type of melanoma.</p> <p>Nodular melanoma looks different from other types of melanoma; they are raised and even in colour.</p>				