



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DERMATOLOGY PROVIDES TIPS FOR SKIN SELF-EXAMS

Dermatologists encourage everyone to be a 'Skin Cancer Hero' by learning this life-saving behavior in conjunction with Skin Cancer Awareness Month and Melanoma Monday®

ROSEMONT, Ill. (May 3, 2018) — Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States. It is estimated that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime, and one person dies from melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, every hour.

In recognition of Skin Cancer Awareness Month in May and Melanoma Monday® on May 7, the American Academy of Dermatology is encouraging the public to be a “Skin Cancer Hero” by learning how to detect skin cancer early, when it’s most treatable. The campaign aims to save lives by teaching the public how to identify the warning signs of melanoma, perform a skin self-exam and find free SPOTme® skin cancer screenings in their area.

“Skin cancer is one of the few cancers you can see with the naked eye,” said board-certified dermatologist Ali Hendi, MD, FAAD, an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Georgetown University Medical Center in Washington. “Yet sadly, many people don’t know how to be their own hero when it comes to skin cancer, including what to look for on their skin or when to see a board-certified dermatologist.”

To increase their chances of spotting skin cancer early, when it’s most treatable, Dr. Hendi recommends that everyone check their skin for the ABCDEs of melanoma, the warning signs of this disease:

1. **A is for Asymmetry:** One half of the spot is unlike the other half.
2. **B is for Border:** The spot has an irregular, scalloped or poorly defined border.
3. **C is for Color:** The spot has varying colors from one area to the next, such as shades of tan, brown or black, or areas of white, red or blue.
4. **D is for Diameter:** While melanomas are usually greater than 6 millimeters — or about the size of a pencil eraser — when diagnosed, they can be smaller.
5. **E is for Evolving:** The spot looks different from the rest or is changing in size, shape or color. Even if you don’t have any other symptoms, see a board-certified dermatologist if you notice one of these signs or notice an existing mole start to evolve or change in any way.

“When detected early, skin cancer, including melanoma, is highly treatable, making it imperative to check your skin regularly,” said Dr. Hendi. “It only takes a few minutes to check your skin, and it could save your life.”

To perform a skin self-exam, Dr. Hendi recommends the following tips:

1. **Examine your entire body — front and back — using a full-length mirror.** Then, look at your right and left sides with your arms raised.
2. **Bend your elbows and look carefully at your forearms, underarms and palms.**
3. **Look at the backs of your legs and feet, the spaces between your toes, and the soles of your feet.** Check your fingernails and toenails; however, make sure to remove any nail polish first.
4. **Examine the back of your neck and scalp with a hand mirror.** Part your hair for a closer look.

5. **Finally, check your back and buttocks with a hand mirror.** Consider asking a partner to help, as another set of eyes can be helpful for checking the back and other hard-to-see areas.

“While performing a skin self-exam, keep in mind that skin cancer can develop anywhere on the skin, not just in areas that are exposed to the sun,” said Dr. Hendi. “If you notice any new spots on your skin, scalp or nails, spots that look different from other spots on your body, or spots that are changing, itching or bleeding, make an appointment to see a board-certified dermatologist.”

To learn more about how to detect skin cancer, visit the AAD’s SPOT Skin Cancer™ website — SpotSkinCancer.org — for valuable information and resources on skin cancer prevention and detection, including:

- A video on “[How to Check Your Skin for Skin Cancer](#)” — part of the AAD’s Video of the Month series, which offers tips people can use to properly care for their skin, hair and nails at home.
- A new AAD PSA, “[Caught It](#),” which encourages men over 50 to be aware of changes on their skin so that they can detect skin cancer early, when it’s most treatable.
- A “[How to Be a Skin Cancer Hero](#)” infographic containing tips on how to spot the signs of skin cancer on yourself and your partner.
- How to find a [free SPOTme® skin cancer screening](#) in your area; more than 400 screenings are available nationwide in May.

SPOT Skin Cancer™ is the AAD’s campaign to create a world without skin cancer through public awareness, community outreach programs and services, and advocacy that promote the prevention, detection and care of skin cancer. The AAD designates the first Monday in May as Melanoma Monday® in order to raise awareness of melanoma and encourage early detection through skin self-exams.

The public can help raise awareness of melanoma and other types of skin cancer by using the hashtag **#skincancerhero** when sharing AAD resources on social media, and by encouraging friends and family members to take advantage of the AAD’s free skin cancer screenings. Individuals who have been affected by skin cancer can share their personal stories on SpotSkinCancer.org to provide support and inspiration for others fighting skin cancer, and communicate the importance of skin cancer prevention and early detection.

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Headquartered in Rosemont, Ill., the American Academy of Dermatology, founded in 1938, is the largest, most influential, and most representative of all dermatologic associations. With a membership of more than 19,000 physicians worldwide, the AAD is committed to: advancing the diagnosis and medical, surgical and cosmetic treatment of the skin, hair and nails; advocating high standards in clinical practice, education, and research in dermatology; and supporting and enhancing patient care for a lifetime of healthier skin, hair and nails. For more information, contact the AAD at (888) 462-DERM (3376) or aad.org. Follow the AAD on [Facebook](#) (American Academy of Dermatology), [Twitter](#) (@AADskin), or [YouTube](#) (AcademyofDermatology).