



SkinHealth



# your skin health

what you need to know

# skin cancer

what you need  
to know

Rates of skin cancer are increasing faster than any other cancer in the UK, with figures doubling every 10-20 years.<sup>1,2</sup>

More than 12,000 cases of malignant melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer are diagnosed every year in the UK and over 2,000 will die from the disease this year alone.<sup>1</sup>

Nearly 152,000 new non-melanoma skin cancers are diagnosed in the UK each year.<sup>2</sup>

but surely it won't  
happen to me

It doesn't matter whether you're young, middle-aged or an older adult, melanoma does not discriminate where age is concerned. The simple fact is that if you fail to protect your skin from UV (ultraviolet) radiation caused by the sun and/or sunbeds, you're putting yourself at risk. If you allow your skin to become red and burn, your risk of skin cancer can dramatically increase.



**2,000+**  
uk deaths this year

**12,000**  
cases every year

**all ages**  
are at risk

**Malignant  
Melanoma  
- the facts**

<sup>1</sup> Cancer Research UK. Melanoma skin cancer statistics, 2020. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yxtey5vx>







<sup>2</sup> Cancer Research UK. Non-melanoma skin cancer statistics, 2020. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/y52zh2em>  
<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/melanoma/about>

# who is most at risk?

Your skin type is a major contributing factor to your risk of sun damage and developing skin cancer. Certain skin types are at greater risk of sun damage and therefore have a higher risk of developing the disease. However, all skin types can be damaged by over-exposure to UV radiation and therefore to varying degrees **we are ALL at risk of developing skin cancer.**

## Fitzpatrick skin types

Dermatologists, plastic surgeons and skin care professionals use the Fitzpatrick Skin Types scale as a tool to classify your skin type and colour.

Skin type	Details
 I	<b>Skin colour:</b> light, pale white, freckled (blue eye colour), likely to have light blond or red hair. <b>Reaction to sun:</b> always burns, never tans.
 II	<b>Skin colour:</b> white, peach, fair (blue, green, hazel eye colour). <b>Reaction to sun:</b> skin will usually burn in the sun and tans with difficulty.
 III	<b>Skin colour:</b> white to light brown, olive (dark blue, hazel, brown eye colour). <b>Reaction to sun:</b> skin will sometimes burn and will tan gradually.
 IV	<b>Skin colour:</b> olive, light to moderate brown (light brown eye colour). <b>Reaction to sun:</b> skin rarely burns and tans easily.
 V	<b>Skin colour:</b> brown, dark brown (dark brown eye colour). <b>Reaction to sun:</b> very rarely burns and tans very easily.
 VI	<b>Skin colour:</b> very dark brown to black (dark brown eye colour). <b>Reaction to sun:</b> never burns, tans very easily, deeply pigmented.

fair skin  
that burns  
easily

red or  
fair hair

moles or  
freckles

family  
history

sunburn  
history

## at risk groups

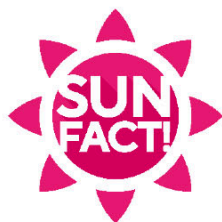
Whilst we are all at risk from skin cancer there are certain groups that are considered to be at greater risk due to their occupation, recreational activities or general lifestyle choices. Practising **'The Five S's of Sun Safety'** (page 9) whenever exposed to the sun's harmful rays will significantly decrease your risk of developing skin cancer.

## Outdoor workers

While occupational risks are inherent in many jobs, workers who make a living outdoors are often in the sun and will be subject to an increased threat of skin cancer from repeated over-exposure to the sun's harmful UV rays.

## Outdoor sports

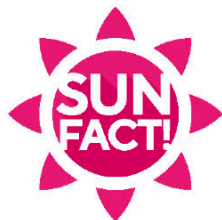
Whether playing or watching outdoor sports or enjoying outdoor recreation on a regular basis, not using adequate sun protection can significantly increase your exposure to the sun's harmful UV rays, increasing the risk of skin cancer later in life.



**REMEMBER**, you can still burn on overcast days. Your skin is very delicate and should always be protected.

**See page 9** for five simple steps for sun safety.

The good news is that skin cancer can be prevented just by adopting some simple and inexpensive sun care habits. It's never too late to start protecting yourself properly, it could save your life!



According to dermatologists, you don't have to lie on a beach every day for two weeks to be at risk. Sitting around in the midday strong sunshine

between 11.00-15.00 for instance without without wearing any sunscreen can be enough to get sunburnt and cause damage to exposed skin.

## Fast facts on skin cancer

- ✓ **Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the UK<sup>1</sup>**
- ✓ **Melanoma skin cancer is the 5th most common cancer in the UK<sup>1</sup>**
- ✓ **There are nearly 152,000 new non-melanoma skin cancer cases in the UK every year. The same as breast, prostate and lung cancer combined**
- ✓ **However, there are only around 720 non-melanoma skin cancer deaths each year, less than 1% of all cancer deaths in the UK<sup>2</sup>**
- ✓ **Malignant melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer is one of the most common cancers in young adults in the UK**
- ✓ **Over the last 25 years, rates of malignant melanoma in the UK have risen faster than any other common cancer.**

## No1 skin cancer fact

- ✓ **Over 80% of all skin cancers are caused by over-exposure to UV radiation from the sun and/or sunbeds. This means that the majority of all skin cancers are preventable by undertaking simple sun safety measures. (turn to pages 11-12 on how to protect your skin).**

<sup>1</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y6rpuqwu>

<sup>2</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yyl3hwnx>

# Early detection could save your life – be skin aware

Those most at risk from melanoma are those with fair skin, lots of moles and/or freckles or a family history of skin cancer. However, everyone is at risk, especially if you spend time in the sun and/or use or have used sunbeds.

A melanoma can grow anywhere on the body, so it is important to check your entire body regularly (once per month) for any changes or abnormalities.

You may have some moles or dark patches on your skin that are flat or slightly raised, usually these are harmless. **BUT**, if you detect any moles or patches that have changed in shape, size or colour, here are some signs to look out for.

What our customers think of **SkinCheck**

**You should consult your GP immediately if you develop any of the following signs listed below as they may indicate a melanoma:**

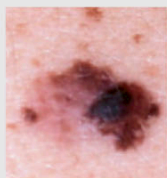
- ✔ Changing shape, particularly getting an irregular outline
- ✔ Changing colour, getting darker, becoming patchy or multi-shaded
- ✔ An existing mole getting bigger or a new mole growing quickly
- ✔ If a mole starts to itch or become painful
- ✔ If a mole is bleeding, becoming crusty and/or looks inflamed.

**The ABCDE Melanoma Rule** will help you to remember what to look out for and the images on **page 6** show abnormal moles and melanomas, but remember, yours may not look exactly like these. **So, if you notice ANY changes or unusual marks that have lasted more than a few weeks then you must consult your GP or Check4Cancer immediately.**

“ Thank you so much. An incredibly reassuring visit. I came away feeling that someone had finally taken my concerns seriously and checked every mole thoroughly. I also learnt a great deal and feel more confident when examining my skin.”

## REMEMBER the ABCDE Melanoma Rule

The ABCDE Melanoma Rule is a guide to help you look-out for any moles on the skin that change in size, shape, colour, become itchy or start bleeding.



### A = ASYMMETRY:

When half the mole doesn't match the other



### B = BORDER:

When the borders of the mole are irregular/ragged or blurred



### C = COLOUR:

When the colour of the mole varies throughout and/or there appears to be no uniform pigmentation



### D = DIAMETER:

If the diameter is greater than 6mm (the size of a pencils eraser)



### E = EVOLVING:

Changes in the mole over a variable time, weeks, months, years



### Common sites in Fitzpatrick skin types V & VI

- ✓ nails
- ✓ hands (palms)
- ✓ feet (soles)
- ✓ inside the mouth

## What our customers think of SkinCheck



*No improvement needed! My second visit today, this time in London for a skin check after having a Malignant Melanoma a few years ago. Nurse doing examination was informative and put me at ease throughout my appointment. Came away feeling relieved and happy. This will be a yearly thing I will do now."*



*Very professional service, I was made to feel welcome and everything was very well explained. I will be using SkinCheck every two years as recommended. Really happy I took the time to have the check-up carried out."*

# Checking your skin

It is important to regularly check your skin for signs of change to detect cancer early. It could save your life!

**A complete self-skin examination takes less than five minutes and we recommend you check your skin monthly. You should look out for the following changes to your skin:**

- ✓ **Changes in the size, shape and colour of your moles**
- ✓ **Altered sensation, such as bleeding, oozing, inflammation and check all moles that are over 6mm**

**The equipment you will need for a self-skin examination:**

- ✓ **A full length mirror**
- ✓ **A hand mirror**
- ✓ **Good lighting**

**Step 1 - Use a hand mirror to examine your neck and scalp**

- ✓ **Carefully look at your head and neck**
- ✓ **Check through your hair and move the mirror to behind your ears**

**Step 2 - Look at your upper chest**

- ✓ **Check your arms, then raise them one at a time, checking your underarms and forearms**
- ✓ **When looking at your hands, look at palms, fingernails and between your fingers**
- ✓ **Examine the rest of your chest. Women need to check underneath their breasts**
- ✓ **Check the rest of your abdomen**

**Step 3 - Look at your legs, between toes and the soles of your feet**

- ✓ **Sit down and look at the front of your thighs, your knees and your shins**
- ✓ **Use your hand mirror to look at the backs of your legs, thighs and calves**
- ✓ **Then look at the tops and soles of your feet, checking between the toes and your toenails**
- ✓ **Then inspect your genital area**

**Step 4 - Back and shoulders**

- ✓ **Continue your examination by standing up and looking at your back and shoulders in a full-length mirror with the aid of a hand mirror**
- ✓ **Finish the examination by looking at the back of your neck and through your scalp (a hairdryer can help you part your hair more easily)**

## Handy Hint

**During your examination we recommend that:**

- ✓ **MEN should pay particular attention to their trunk**
- ✓ **WOMEN should carefully check their legs**

These are the most common areas to develop melanomas, the most dangerous form of skin cancer.

**If you are concerned about any moles or lesions after your self-examination consult your GP or Check4Cancer immediately.**

# Sunburn and sunbeds

Sunburn is a reaction to over-exposure of UV radiation caused by the sun and/or sunbeds. The superficial layers of the skin release chemicals that cause your blood vessels to expand and leak fluid causing swelling, pain and redness. Without sun protection, UV radiation starts to penetrate deep into the layers of the skin causing damage to the skin cells. Skin turns red within 2-6 hours of being burnt and continues for the next 24-72 hours. The simple fact that your skin has changed colour is a sign of damage.

**UVA Radiation** penetrates deep into the skin affecting the living cells that lie under the skin's surface. UVA causes long term damage like wrinkles, blotchiness, sagging and discolouration.

**UVB Radiation** penetrates the superficial level of skin and is the main cause of tanning and sunburn.

**Both UVA and UVB** have been demonstrated to induce immunosuppression and DNA damage. These changes may lead to skin cancer.

**Sunbeds are not safe 'FACT'.** Research has proven that sunbeds give out the same harmful UV rays as the sun, damaging the DNA in our skin cells which can cause all types of skin cancer. It is estimated that sunbeds cause around 100 deaths from melanoma in the UK each year with incidences rising at an alarming rate.

Experts link the dramatic rise in the incidence of melanoma in young adults to those who use sunbeds. Sunbeds are now banned for under 18's.

Using a sunbed just once a month can increase your risk of skin cancer by more than half and regular sunbed use under the age of 35 increases the risk of skin cancer by an alarming 75%.



## FACT!

Regular sunbed use under the age of 35 years' increases the risk of getting skin cancer by 75%.

## Sunbeds cause premature aging, sagging and wrinkling of the skin.

A common misconception is that a sunbed tan will prepare or protect your skin before you go on holiday – it won't! The intensity of some types of UV rays from sunbeds can be up to 10 – 15 times higher than that of the midday sun. Burning or going red under a sunbed is a sign that you have seriously harmed your skin. Sunbeds can cause premature aging, sagging, wrinkling and blotching of the skin. Once the tan fades the damage remains and can have very serious consequences over time.

The main cause of skin cancer is exposure to UV from sunlight or sunbeds. Remember it's not just sunbathing that puts you at risk but just being in the sun without adequate protection.

If you take part in outdoor hobbies or sports such as golf, cricket, bowls, fishing or gardening for example, or have an outdoor job, you will be at greater risk. To keep safe and make sure you **NEVER BURN** you should follow 'The **Five S's of Sun Safety**'.

## The **Five S's of Sun Safety**

SLIP

on a t-shirt

SLOP

on the sunscreen

SLAP

on a broad brimmed hat

SLIDE

on quality sunglasses

SHADE

from the sun when possible

## SLIP

- ✓ On clothing which acts as an effective barrier protecting our skin from the sun
- ✓ Shoulders are easily burned, so try to keep them covered
- ✓ Close weave fabrics provide better protection.

## SLOP

- ✓ Apply SPF 30 + broad spectrum, 4 star + rated, waterproof sunscreen every two hours.
- ✓ Make sure that the sunscreen has a UVA symbol
- ✗ Never rely on sunscreen alone to protect your skin.

## SLAP

- ✓ Wear a broad-brimmed hat that shades your face, neck and ears. Please note that baseball caps do not provide adequate shade
- ✓ A close weave or UPF rated fabric provides the best protection.

## SLIDE

- ✓ Wear wrap-around sunglasses with UV protection to protect your eyes from the sun's rays
- ✓ Look for the European CE mark, which indicates a safe level of protection
- ✓ Sunglasses labelled with a high EDF (which ranges from 1-10) will provide the best protection.

## SHADE

- ✓ Seek shade, particularly between 11am and 3pm when UV penetration is at its strongest
- ✓ Always keep babies and toddlers in the shade
- ✗ Never rely on shade alone, always combine with personal protection measures.

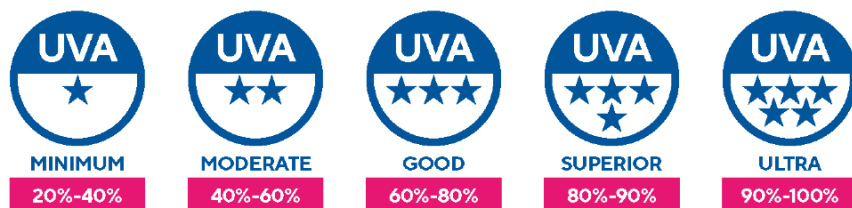
## Applying sunscreen

Apply your Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 30+ sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside and always reapply at least every two hours. It is important to use a generous amount, the average sized adult should apply at least a teaspoon of sunscreen to each arm, leg, front and back of body and at least half a teaspoon to the face (not forgetting the ears and neck). If you apply the sunscreen too thinly it will reduce the SPF factor.

## Choosing the right sunscreen

- ✓ **Choose a high Sun Protection Factor (SPF), most fair skinned people will need SPF 30 or higher to stop from burning in the summertime**
- ✓ **Choose a sunscreen product with a superior UVA 4-5 star rated protection symbol.**

### Choosing the right sunscreen and understanding UVA Protection



Sunscreen absorbs this percentage of UVA rays compared with UVB

## What our customers think of **SkinCheck**



*The clinic environment was new and clean. I was able to bring my wife along who wished to learn what to look out for. The appointment was unhurried, very informative and extremely professional. I have already recommended the service to my colleagues at work. Thank you!*

# Preventing skin cancer and protecting your skin

## Protecting babies and children

Studies have shown that sunburn in childhood can double the risk of developing melanoma (the deadliest form of skin cancer) in later life. Young skin is very delicate and easily damaged by the sun, therefore it is essential that all children are adequately protected. We experience over half our lifetime exposure to the sun before we reach the age of 18 years and burning during this time can cause irreversible damage.

- ✓ **Keep toddlers and babies in the shade as much as possible, particularly when abroad**
- ✓ **UV protective sun suits are excellent for young children, but don't forget to apply sunscreen on exposed areas**
- ✓ **Don't forget school times, lunch breaks are taken at the same time of day when UV penetration is strongest**
- ✓ **Remember children can still burn on overcast days! No fair skinned baby or child should have a suntan or be sunburned!**

## Sun safety for babies and children

- ✓ **Use a minimum SPF of 50+ sunscreen with a 4-5-star UVA rating**
- ✓ **Ensure good coverage, don't forget to apply sunscreen to their shoulders, ears, nose, cheeks and tops of feet**
- ✓ **Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before children go outdoors and reapply at least every two hours**
- ✓ **Use a waterproof sunscreen on children aged 3+ when swimming and reapply immediately after towelling. Waterproof sunscreens should not be used on children aged under 3 years as they can easily overheat**

## Vitamin D – what is safe exposure?

Exposing commonly uncovered areas of the skin (such as the forearms and hands) for short periods (15-20 minutes) when in strong sunlight provides vitamin D. (longer periods of exposure may be needed for those with darker skin.) Avoid hot sun between 11.00-15.00hrs. Sunbeds do not contribute to vitamin D synthesis<sup>1</sup>.

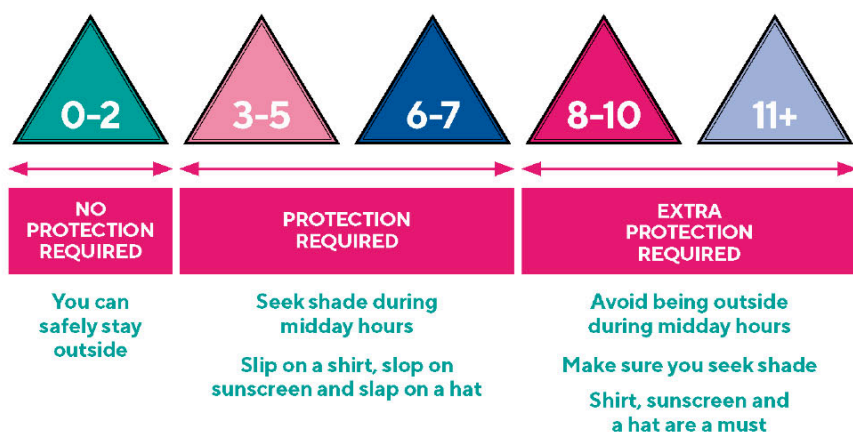
All adults living in the UK are at increased risk of vitamin D deficiency should be advised to take a daily supplement containing 400 international units (10 micrograms) of vitamin D throughout the year, including in the winter months<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Reference: National Institute for Clinical Excellence. Vitamin D deficiency – treatment and prevention. 2018. Available at: <https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/vitamin-d-deficiency-in-adults-treatment-prevention/>

## The Solar UV Index

The UV Solar Index was developed by the World Health Organisation and it describes the level of solar UV radiation at the earth's surface and the potential for skin damage. The higher the index value, the greater the potential for damage to the skin and eye.

### When the UV index reaches 3 or above sun protection measures should be taken



## USEFUL INFO!

Apply your Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 30+ sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside and always reapply at least every two hours.

# Types of non-melanoma skin cancer and what to look out for

Skin cancer can be divided into two main groups:

1. **Malignant Melanoma (MM)**
2. **Non-Melanoma skin cancer (NMSC)**

It is also important to look out for pre-cancerous skin lesions such as Actinic Keratosis and Intra-Epidermal Carcinoma (Bowen's Disease).

## Actinic Keratosis

Actinic Keratosis (Solar Keratosis, AK, SK) are pre-cancerous skin lesions with the potential to develop into cancer and are the result of long-term over-exposure to the sun.

- ✓ **More than 80% occur on the head and neck, back of the hands and forearms**
- ✓ **Usually actinic keratoses appear as small, brown, pink or whitish, scaly, red single or multiple rough spots smaller than 1cm in diameter**
- ✓ **They can feel rough or cause soreness, irritation, discomfort or pain or they may just pose a cosmetic nuisance.**



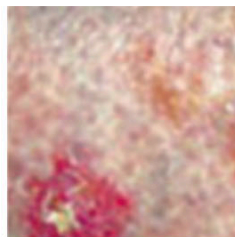
*The images above show examples of Actinic Keratosis*

# Intra-Epidermal Carcinoma

## Intra-Epidermal Carcinoma

Intra-Epidermal Carcinoma (Bowen's Disease) is also a pre-cancerous lesion that typically presents as an asymptomatic, slow growing, sharply demarcated, scaly, red, pink, salmon coloured patch or plaque, most commonly on the head, neck and lower limbs.

- ✓ **The border may be irregular**
- ✓ **The surface may be scaly, crusted, eroded, ulcerated, velvety or warty**
- ✓ **Because of its asymptomatic nature, lesions may become very large by the time of presentation.**



*The images above show examples of Intra-Epidermal Carcinoma*

# Non-Melanoma skin cancers

## Basal Cell Carinomas (BCC's or Rodent Ulcers)

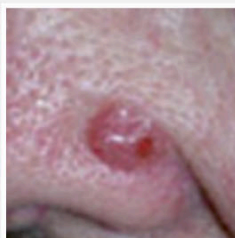
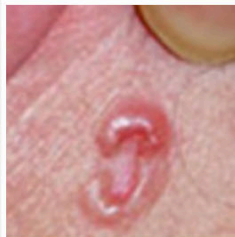
Basal Cell Carcinomas (BCC's or Rodent Ulcers) are the most common type of skin cancer, accounting for around 80% of all cases. BCC's are slow growing and very rarely spread anywhere else on the body.

**BCC's come in different shapes and sizes and can look like:**

- ✓ **Pearly, shiny lumps, skin ulcers or even a patch of dry skin or eczema**
- ✓ **The main thing to look out for is something on the skin that will not heal.**

Fortunately, BCC's very rarely kill but in rare and extreme cases large or neglected BCC's are capable of extensive local invasion ("rodent" ulcer) gnawing into deeper structures.

Most BCC's are easily treated by a variety of methods. However, as the majority occur on the face, having facial surgery with subsequent scarring is not to be taken lightly.



*The images above show examples of Basal Cell Carcinomas*

## Squamous Cell Carcinomas (SCC's)

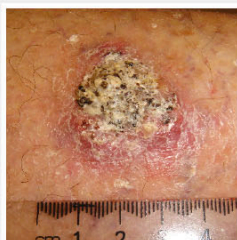
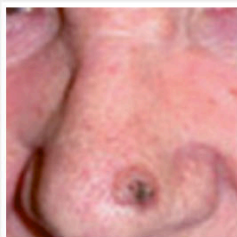
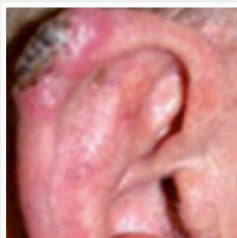
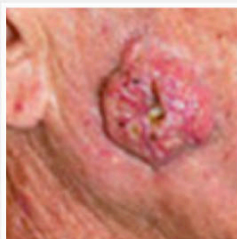
Squamous Cell Carcinomas (SCC's) typically present on the face, ears, lips, mouth and hands.

The appearance varies but is usually:

- ✓ A scaly lump, nodule, ulcer or non-healing sore
- ✓ They often start as small hard white or skin-coloured lumps in the skin that grow at a variable rate.

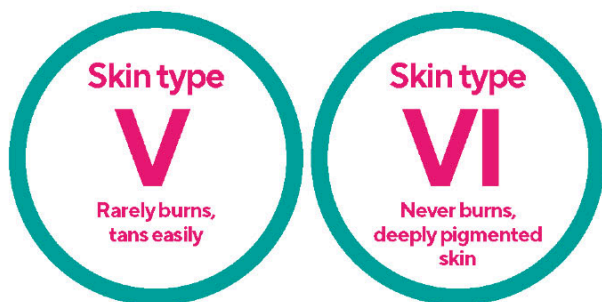
SCC's rarely spread to other parts of the body - but if left untreated, the tumour will increase in size and could spread to local lymph nodes or around the body and in extreme cases can be life threatening.

**Remember** if you are worried about any changes or unusual marks that have lasted more than a few weeks on your skin then you must consult your **GP** or **Check4Cancer** immediately.



The images above show examples of Squamous Cell Carcinomas

# Skin cancer in 'Fitzpatrick Skin Types' V & VI



## Basal Cell Carcinoma

- ✓ Are strongly linked to too much sun
- ✓ They grow slowly and are very unlikely to spread to other parts of the body
- ✓ Although rare in black or Asian skin, the most common place is on the head or neck

## Squamous Cell Carcinoma

- ✓ Are usually curable
- ✓ Can spread to the lymph nodes, which are part of your immune system
- ✓ Although rare in black or Asian skin, they most commonly appear on the legs, bottom, or the genital area

## Melanoma

- ✓ The skin cancer that killed reggae legend Bob Marley (who was mixed race)
- ✓ Less common in black or Asian skin but more easily overlooked and often detected late with potentially worse outcomes
- ✓ Most common in the mouth, under the nails, or on the palms of hands or soles of feet where there is less protective pigment



# OneStop Skin Clinic

OneStop Skin Clinic is a fast-track service for biopsy or removal of a suspicious skin lesion or mole.

After your SkinCheck appointment, we may recommend further investigations including biopsy or removal of your mole or skin lesion. We can then arrange referral to our OneStop Skin service which provides access to consultant skin cancer specialists who are either plastic surgeons or surgical dermatologists and are highly experienced in mole removal to give you the best cosmetic outcome

OneStop Skin Clinic is a fast-track service for removing a mole/s with no need for a GP referral.

- ✓ No need for a GP referral
- ✓ Fast appointments and results
- ✓ Access to highly experienced consultant skin cancer specialists
- ✓ All consultants are members of specialist skin cancer teams
- ✓ Moles removed that are suspicious of cancer are sent to pathology for interpretation
- ✓ Suitable for men and women aged 18+.



## MORE INFO?

To book an appointment at one of our 'OneStop Skin Clinics' please visit [www.check4cancer.com](http://www.check4cancer.com) or call 0800 876 6662



**Check4Cancer** is a trusted provider of personalised cancer detection services. We offer rapid access to personalised screening and diagnostic services for anyone anxious about a possible cancer diagnosis, as well as genetic counselling and testing for patients at increased risk of hereditary cancer. We want to empower you to take control of your health. Early detection gives you a better chance of surviving cancer.

**Check4Cancer** – it could save your life.

**Our clinically led and validated services cover the six most common cancers in the UK**

- ✓ **BOWEL**
- ✓ **BREAST**
- ✓ **CERVICAL**
- ✓ **LUNG**
- ✓ **PROSTATE**
- ✓ **SKIN**

Please visit our website at: **[check4cancer.com](https://check4cancer.com)**  
or call us on **0800 085 6663**

Connect with us  @Check4Cancer  @SkinHealthAid