

WHAT IS MELANOMA?

Melanoma is one of the most dangerous forms of skin cancer, occurring when cancerous growths develop from unrepaired DNA damage to skin cells in the form of malignant tumors, most often because of ultraviolet (UV) radiation from sunshine or tanning beds.

These tumors originate in the pigment-producing melanocytes of the basal (or inner-most) layer of the epidermis. Melanomas often resemble moles, and some actually develop from moles. While the majority of melanomas are black or brown, they can also be flesh-colored, pink, red, purple, blue or white.

Melanoma is caused mainly by intense, occasional UV exposure (frequently leading to sunburn), especially in those who are genetically predisposed to the disease. When recognized and treated early, it is almost always curable. However, in some cases melanoma can advance and spread to other parts of the body, where it becomes hard to treat and can be fatal.

TREATMENTS FOR MELANOMA INCLUDE:

- Surgery, where the entire melanoma is cut out
- Chemotherapy, to stop or slow the growth of cancer cells
- Immunotherapy, to help your body's immune system fight the cancer
- Targeted therapy, which blocks cancer growth.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO AVOID GETTING MELANOMA?

There is no substitute for being smart about ultraviolet radiation and avoiding prolonged, intense exposure to the sun or frequent visits to tanning salons. Avoiding UV radiation is the best way to avoid this form of skin cancer.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH MELANOMA OR ARE FACING A MEDICAL DECISION, BEST DOCTORS IS HERE TO HELP.

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