



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# How to Do a Monthly Skin Exam Using Your Photo Kit

This information describes the warning signs of melanoma and will help teach you how to do a monthly skin exam using your photo kit. You can do the exam yourself or with the help of a family member or friend.

## ■ Melanoma

Melanoma is cancer of the melanocytes, which are the cells that give your skin its color. Melanoma can't be completely prevented, but it is much more treatable when it is detected at an early stage. Protecting yourself from the sun is important to prevent melanoma. It is also important to examine your skin thoroughly each month. This can help you find any suspicious looking moles or spots on your skin as early as possible.

### ABCDEs of melanoma

Warning signs of melanoma are often called the “ABCDEs” of melanoma.

Look for the following on any moles or spots on your skin:

**A - Asymmetry:** One half doesn't match the appearance of the other half.

**B - Border:** The borders (edges) are uneven and irregular.

**C - Color:** The color is not uniform. A number of different shades of brown, tan, or black could appear.

**D - Diameter:** The diameter is more than 6 millimeters (about the size of a pencil eraser).

**E - Evolution:** There is a change in the size, shape, symptoms (such as itching or tenderness), surface (especially bleeding), or color.

### Ugly duckling mole

Another warning sign of melanoma is called the “ugly duckling mole.” This is a mole or spot on your skin that looks or feels different than similar ones on your body.

## ■ Your Photo Kit

Your photo kit is a tool that you can use to do your monthly skin exam. The kit includes:

- Photos of each part of your body that you need to inspect
  - The photos are arranged in the same order that you will inspect each area of your skin.
  - Each photo will be inside a plastic protective cover. You can remove the photos from their

covers if you need to see them better. If you have any notes, insert them in the back of your photo book.

- A magnifying glass to view your skin more closely
- A china marker (wax pencil) to circle any areas of concern
  - When using your china marker, write on the plastic cover with the photo inside. Do not write on the photo itself. The markings on the plastic cover can be removed with a tissue.
- A password-protected DVD with all of your photos in digital format
  - Close-up images of your body are not included in your photo book. However, the DVD includes a program that lets you focus in on any area of a digital photo. Instructions on how to use the program are included with the DVD.
  - All of your digital photos are also stored securely at your doctor's office.

## Other equipment

In addition to your photo kit, you will need the following items to do your skin exam:

- A full-length mirror
- A hand-held mirror
- A comb or hair dryer

## ■ Skin Exam

### General guidelines

- Do your skin exam in a well-lit room.
- You can perform a skin exam alone, but it may be a good idea to ask a family member or friend to check your scalp and back. Your hair dresser may help find or monitor spots on your scalp.
- Examine one side of your body at a time, from top to bottom. Start with one side of your body, move on to the back of your body, and then examine the other side of your body.
- Looking in a mirror will reverse the right and left sides of your body. Holding your photo book up to the mirror can help you compare the images.
- Remember to look for the ABCDEs of melanoma and any ugly duckling moles. Mark any changes or areas of concern on your photos using your china marker.
- Bring your photos to your next appointment if you:
  - Have multiple areas of concern
  - Have difficulty remembering any locations
  - Can't see any areas that a family member or friend circled with the china marker
- Make it easy to remember to do your monthly exam. Do it along with another task at the same time each month. If you have a personal calendar, put in monthly reminders to do your skin exam.
- Visit your gynecologist, dentist, and eye doctor regularly. They may see early signs of possible skin cancer. If so, they will send you to your dermatologist.

## Steps

1. Look at your face in the mirror and then compare it to the photo of your face. If you are using your DVD, follow the same directions as you would when using your photo book. Look at your face in the mirror and then compare it to the digital image on your DVD.
2. Examine your scalp. Use a comb or a hair dryer on a cool setting to move your hair so that you can see your skin better. You can ask someone else to do this for you.
3. Examine your chest, lower abdomen, and the upper and lower parts of your legs. Compare the photos of each area to what you see when you look at your skin.
4. Be sure to look in between your toes, fingers, and legs. Melanoma can grow on skin that is never exposed to the sun.

## ■ If You Find Any Signs of Melanoma

If you find any ugly duckling moles or moles or spots on your skin showing the ABCDEs of melanoma, mark it in your photo book. Then, call your doctor. It may not be melanoma, but your doctor or nurse will decide if you need to see a dermatologist. If you notice any small changes to these moles or spots, tell your doctor at your next routine visit. Please contact your doctor or nurse if you have any questions.

If you have any questions or concerns, talk with a member of your healthcare team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at \_\_\_\_\_. After 5:00 pm, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call \_\_\_\_\_. If there's no number listed, or you're not sure, call (212) 639-2000.