

## The Many Faces of Skin Cancer

### Know What to Watch

David V. Poole, MD

Skin cancers can have an innocent appearance, so it's possible that even someone who takes good care of his or her skin may not realize how important it is to get a lesion, mark, or mole checked out by an expert. If it turns out to be a skin cancer, every day you wait will allow the cancer to grow larger, making its treatment more difficult. While there are many different treatment options for skin cancers, if surgical removal is necessary, you want the cancer to be as small as possible.

Note that your esthetician may be aware of skin cancer symptoms and may be able to alert you to a change in your skin; however, he or she is not allowed to make a diagnosis. Your practitioner

### Basal Cell Carcinoma

Basal cell carcinoma (BCC) is the most common form of skin cancer. It arises from the outer layer of the skin, and it has a strong relationship to sun exposure. It usually invades and destroys tissue only in the area where it is; spreading to another part of the body is rare. A typical BCC has a pearly or waxy nodule with a rolled border and tiny spider veins on and around it.

### Squamous Cell

Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) is the second most common form of malignant skin cancer. It accounts for about 10 percent of all skin malignancies. It is also most commonly

*"Healthy skin  
is only a touch  
away."*

-Lori Murtagh



Keep an eye out for skin issues, as early detection is the key to successful treatment.

may, though, be able to provide you with an appropriate referral to a dermatologist or other physician.

Following is a brief overview of the most common types of skin cancer. Additional details can be found at [www.skincancer.org](http://www.skincancer.org), the website of the Skin Cancer Foundation.

seen on sun-damaged skin, but it can arise without sun exposure or from various preexisting skin lesions, such as actinic keratoses, burn scars, radiation-exposed or treated skin, or even in areas of chronic skin irritation. SCC is most often "local" but can spread to surrounding tissues or even other

Continued on page 2

### Office Hours and Contact

Lori Murtagh, LE  
Licensed Esthetician-Oncology Trained  
412-741-9600  
[lorimurt.healthyskin@gmail.com](mailto:lorimurt.healthyskin@gmail.com)  
[lorimurtagh.skincaretherapy.net](http://lorimurtagh.skincaretherapy.net)  
[www.facebook.com/salonbernabo](https://www.facebook.com/salonbernabo)

### In this Issue

**The Many Faces of Skin Cancer  
Relief for Computer Users  
3 Skin Care Considerations**

Continued from page 1

parts of the body. SCCs most often are found in red, irritated, sun-damaged skin. They often have a scaly, red, crusted appearance and may have an ulcer in them. The tissue is often fragile and may bleed easily when rubbed.

## Malignant Melanoma

Malignant melanoma is the least common of the three main types of skin cancer, but it is the most dangerous. While there are several varieties of malignant melanoma, the only thing you absolutely need to know about them is that any of them can be deadly; malignant melanoma accounts for most of the deaths related to skin cancer. The most disturbing statistic is that despite public education campaigns about the dangers of sun exposure and skin cancer, the incidence of malignant melanoma in the United States continues to rise. Fair-skinned people, such as blondes and redheads in particular, need to watch their skin closely.

Any mole or pigmented spot on their body that changes in any way should be checked. If it gets bigger, darker, changes shape, has irregular edges, is or becomes asymmetric, has light and dark areas in it, or ever bleeds, it should be checked immediately. The ABCDs of melanoma are:

- A: Asymmetry
- B: Borders that are irregular
- C: Color changes
- D: Diameter that is enlarging

With early detection and treatment, most can be successfully removed and the patient completely cured. However, if not detected and treated early, these killers can spread to the lungs, the liver, the brain, and elsewhere.

## Other Skin Things

It is important to note that not everything that shows up on the skin is a skin cancer. Unfortunately, with age often comes a lot of skin "things." Actinic keratoses (patches of sun-damaged skin) are often seen as patches of dry, scaly skin that can be red and irritated. These are most often found on frequently sun-exposed areas of the

body, such as the head and neck. If treated properly, these will go away. If left untreated, up to 20 percent will turn into skin cancer.

Seborrheic keratoses are often scary-looking skin lesions that enlarge over time. They are generally pigmented, and have a raised, wart-looking appearance. Cosmetically they can be unsightly, but fortunately have little potential to turn into skin cancer.

Dermatitis (irritation of the skin) comes in as many different shapes, sizes, varieties, and causes as you can think of. Things such as new laundry soap or a new piece of jewelry can cause what is known as contact dermatitis (irritation of the skin when something contacts it). Often these will go away on their own, but treatments are available to reduce discomfort.

## Advice to Live By

Remember, most of the things on the skin are not skin cancer. But for that small percentage that are, often the only way to know is to have it checked by a skin care expert. Early detection and

treatment of skin cancer is the key to successful treatment and cure. Have any questionable spot on your skin evaluated by a physician. If necessary, ask for a referral to a dermatologist or plastic surgeon in your area who treats skin cancers on a regular basis. When in doubt, check it out.

*David V. Poole is a double board-certified plastic surgeon in Altamonte Springs, Florida. He can be reached at [www.drpoolemd.com](http://www.drpoolemd.com).*

*Excerpted and adapted from an article in *Massage and Bodywork* magazine. Copyright. Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals. All rights reserved.*



Sun protection is crucial for everyone, as sun damage is a leading cause of skin cancer.

# Relief for Computer Users

Mary Betts Sinclair

According to the American Optometric Association, 46 percent of Americans spend at least five hours a day on a computer or smartphone. When looking at a screen, many people hold their head forward of center and slouch, which puts many upper-body muscles in a shortened position.

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO AVOID PAIN AND STRAIN:

Computer users tend to blink very little and stare straight ahead, not using their peripheral vision. Be sure to keep blinking, which washes your eyes in naturally therapeutic tears and breaks up your stare.

Take frequent rest breaks using the 20-20 Rule: every 20 minutes, spend 20 seconds looking at something far away, preferably gazing out a window. Also, stand up and move as much as possible. This is a great time to do eye-muscle stretches and range-of-motion exercises for your back and neck. Use your fingertips to gently

massage around your eyes, temples, and forehead. Finally, rub your palms together and gently cup your closed eyes. Relax and breathe freely.

Make sure you have good light, and check that your monitor is the correct distance away from your eyes and at the right height. Also, adjust the screen settings to where they are comfortable in terms of resolution and flicker.

If you wear eyeglasses, have them checked. For example, in order for some people to see clearly with their heads held in an upright and balanced position, and without chronic tightness in the back of the neck, they may need to have a prescription for a longer focal length or larger bifocal inserts, or have an adjustment of their eyeglass frames if they are bent or twisted. Some people may need a stronger or weaker prescription. If your doctor has prescribed a pair of glasses specifically for seeing the computer screen, wear them.

Mary Betts Sinclair is an Oregon-based educator and bodyworker. Learn more about her at [www.marybettsinclair.com](http://www.marybettsinclair.com).



Take frequent breaks to avoid eye strain.

## 3 Skin Care Considerations

"Before raiding the pantry for an at-home skin care recipe, remember that many ingredients in their natural state are neither safe nor effective for skin," says Ellen Clark, a licensed esthetician and founder of Control Corrective Skincare Systems ([www.controlcorrective.com](http://www.controlcorrective.com)). And even the safest ingredient may prompt an allergic reaction. Clark urges do-it-yourselfers to consider the following before formulating at home:

1. Perform a patch test. Before experimenting on your skin, you should ideally see an esthetician for a complete skin analysis and personalized recommendations for appropriate at-home skin care. At the very least, perform a patch test by putting a small amount of the product on your neck just behind your ear; wait until you're sure it has not caused any adverse reactions.

2. Natural isn't always skin-friendly. Many ingredients must be formulated for skin and are not safe in their natural state. For example, if left on too long, natural acids found in citrus can cause burns and irritation.

3. Professional skin care is the best recipe. Adopt a professional regimen that is specifically formulated for your skin type. And don't forget to visit your esthetician regularly!

*Throughout  
history 'tender  
loving care' has  
uniformly been  
recognized as a  
valuable element  
in healing.*

-Larry Dossey

A SPECIAL NOTE FROM LORI:

Valentine's Day will come and then go, but Chocolate is always here! A recent article "Dark Indulgence" by Alex Caspero featured in ASCP Skin Deep magazine says Chocolate lovers can rejoice! (That's a man after my heart!) Dark chocolate is loaded with Flavanols, which are bioactive compounds found in dark chocolate and other antioxidant-rich foods. They are great for the skin as they can protect against sun damage, increase skin density and hydration, improve blood flow to the skin, and the vascular function may even help to improve brain function. Just remember, dark chocolate must be consumed in moderation--a 3.5 ounce of quality dark chocolate contains about 600 calories and a moderate amount of sugar. For maximum flavor impact, place a small piece in your mouth and allow it to slowly melt. Maybe share a piece with your special Valentine and savor the flavor!

## Salon Bernabo

2612 Nicholson Road  
Sewickley, PA 15143

---

MEMBER

