

SEE SPOT...

SEE SPOT CHANGE...

SEE DOCTOR...

OR SEE SPOT KILL...

## A HEALTH ALERT FOR TEENS



[www.skincheck.org](http://www.skincheck.org)

If you think skin cancer is no big deal and only happens to older people, think again. Melanoma, the deadliest skin cancer, can strike anyone - including you right now. And when you reach your mid-20s you're more likely to get melanoma than any other cancer. The U.S. incidence is more than double that of new HIV infections and is increasing rapidly. An American dies of melanoma every hour but almost every death could have been prevented by early self-detection. Melanoma can start in moles or in clear skin, even unexposed skin. Moles may be flat or raised. Normal moles (left 2 photos) are round or oval with sharp, even borders, uniform colors, and are less than 1/4" wide. Atypical moles (right 2 photos) have one or more of these features: fuzzy borders, mixed shades, more than 1/4" wide, raised "fried egg" center.



Any of these factors increase your risk of melanoma:

- Use of tanning beds, even once.
- Any blistering sunburns under age 20.
- Having any atypical moles, even one.
- Having 50 or more normal moles.
- Light eyes, freckles, red or blond hair.
- Family history of any skin cancer.

If found early, melanoma is curable by painless removal in a doctors office. No chemo or radiation is required. A 10-minute monthly self-exam is all it takes to find it early. Use a wall mirror in a well-lighted room, a hand mirror with long handle, flashlight, and a brush or dryer for parting hair. Melanoma occurs more often on the back and legs than on the face.



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Check all areas of face, ears, neck, underarms, chest, hands, and under nails. Females should also check under breasts. Check scalp or have someone help. Check upper and lower back carefully, then buttocks and genitals including hidden areas. Sit on a small chair or stool and check all sides of legs and feet including between toes and under toenails.

There are two types of melanoma, radial and nodular. Radial melanomas start by growing in diameter, may look ugly, and usually have two or more "ABCD" properties as in the photos below.



- |            |                            |
|------------|----------------------------|
| Asymmetry: | One half unlike other half |
| Border:    | Irregular, notched         |
| Color:     | Varies between areas       |
| Diameter:  | More than 1/4 inch         |

All melanomas eventually start growing vertically but nodular melanomas begin vertical growth immediately, often look innocent, and may show no ABCD signs. Instead they always have 3 "EFG" properties, as in the photos below.



- |           |                     |
|-----------|---------------------|
| Elevated: | Not flat            |
| Firm:     | Not flabby          |
| Growing:  | More than two weeks |

**No matter what the appearance, be suspicious of anything new or changing more than two weeks on your skin and act immediately.**

To decrease your melanoma risk avoid tanning beds; using them 10 times or more in a year multiplies your risk by 8. Models and TV stars use sunless bronzers, the only safe way to tan. Visit [sunless.com](http://sunless.com) to find some that will give you a natural looking tan.

Disclaimer: This information is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose skin problems. If you have a skin problem consult a dermatologist, plastic surgeon, or other professional health care provider.

*In Loving Memory*



*Jennifer Linscott Tietgen  
1975-2002*

Services to New York schools are made possible by the generosity of the Jennifer Linscott Tietgen Family Foundation of Canandaigua, NY.

© Melanoma Education Foundation, Visit [www.skincheck.org](http://www.skincheck.org) for more information and photos.

Dear Parent,

Today your student learned about melanoma, a common, serious skin cancer that is increasingly striking teens and young adults. Melanoma is one of the deadliest cancers unless it is found and removed at an early stage. Fortunately it is easy to find early by self-examination of the skin.

As part of the lesson students are assigned to teach their parents about melanoma using the accompanying "See Spot" document.

By sharing the information with you they are providing a service that may save the life of a family member.

To confirm your son or daughter has completed the assignment please print this form, sign and date it, and give it to your son/daughter to return to his/her wellness teacher.

Thank you.

By signing this form I confirm that my son/daughter has taught me about melanoma using the "See Spot" document.

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Student Name

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Parent or Guardian Signature

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Date