



3341 SW 15<sup>th</sup> Street – Pompano Beach, FL 33069 - USA – (954) 979-3845 Fax: (954) 979-7997  
[www.healthchemdiagnostics.com](http://www.healthchemdiagnostics.com)

HOME \* MONITORING \* TEST

## SKIN GROWTH MONITORING SYSTEM

### Overview & Instructions

Congratulations! By purchasing the Health Check™ Skin Growth Monitoring System, you have demonstrated an interest in staying healthy. Medical experts agree that prevention is the strongest defense against melanoma, a serious, sometimes life-threatening form of skin cancer. They also recommend regular examinations because all types of skin cancer are curable – if it is found and treated early.

This kit includes everything you need to examine the moles on your body and monitor them for suspicious changes that could be early warning signs of melanoma. In addition, this booklet:

- teaches you some basics about your skin and skin cancer
- describes the early signs of melanoma
- tells you how to perform skin examinations
- offers you Health Tips to help prevent skin cancer

Performing regular skin examinations is an important step toward maintaining your health and the health of your loved ones.

## Table of Contents

3	Your Skin
4	Skin Color
4	Skin Cancer
6	The ABC's of Mole Dangers
7	Instructions
7	Directions
9	Your Mole Score
9	Guidelines for Use

## Your Skin

Your skin is one of your body's organs, like the kidneys and lungs. In fact, it's the largest organ, and can make up to 15% of your body weight. That means the skin on a 5-foot, 100-pound woman weighs 15 pounds. It also measures about 16 square feet!

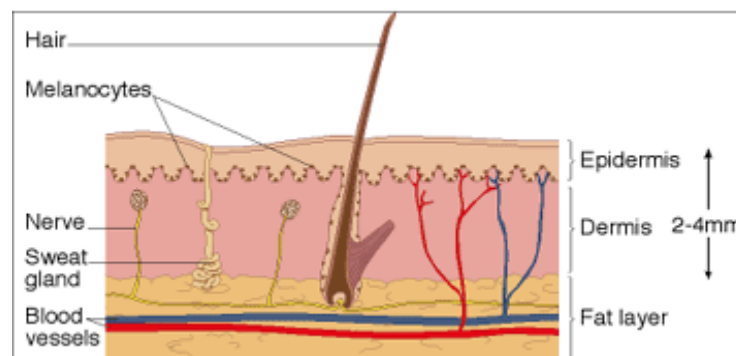
The main purpose of your skin is to hold in your body's organs and fluids, and keep out unwanted bacteria, chemicals, heat, cold and sun. In other words, the skin is your protective container.

Even though your scalp, palms, eyelids and feet have different textures, all your skin is made the same way. There are two main layers, the epidermis and the dermis. Your skin is a continuous cycle of cells that start in the dermis and make their way up to the epidermis, where they flake off. In fact, every month you "grow" a new skin in this way.

The **EPIDERMIS** is the top layer of the skin. In some places, like the eyelids, it is only a few cells thick. The surface of the epidermis is made up of dead cells that were once part of the living cells below. These dead cells contain a tough substance called keratin, which is also a part of your hair and nails.

The **DERMIS** is up to 30 times thicker than the epidermis. It is made up of flexible fibers called collagen, which give your skin its elasticity and strength. (Aging makes the collagen less flexible, leading to lines and wrinkles). The dermis contains blood vessels to provide oxygen and food. These blood vessels help regulate your body's temperature. When it's hot, they expand and allow your body to lose more heat. When it's too cold, they narrow to cut your heat loss. You also have about 2 million sweat glands in your dermis that show up as the pores on the surface of your skin. They help cool your body through perspiration and also remove excess salt from the blood. The nerve endings in your dermis allow you to feel touch, pain, tickling, heat, cold and other sensations.

## The Skin



This diagram shows the major structures of the dermis and epidermis – the two main layers of the skin.

### Hygiene's No Hype—

*Millions of bacteria live on your skin, most are harmless. If the skin is dirty, bacteria will multiply on your old skin cells and cause body odor, pimples and other skin problems. Regular bathing is important to wash off old dried up skin cells and keep the skin clean and healthy*

### Skin Color

Melanin, a dark pigment made by melanoblasts between the epidermis and dermis determines the lightness and darkness of your skin. When exposed to strong sunlight, the skin makes more melanin, causing the skin to darken. This is how we get a tan, which is really the body's way of protecting itself from harmful ultraviolet rays. Our ancestors from hot climates developed dark skin to survive, while those from cooler areas didn't need the extra melanin and became fair skinned. In today's world of global travel, warm climates are home to many fair-skinned people, who run a greater risk of skin cancer because they do not have the internal protection they need from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays.

*Darker skin is the body's protection against the sun's harmful rays*

### Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is the fastest growing type of cancer in America. At least one in every seven people in the country will get some kind of skin cancer. Left untreated, these cancers can cause disfigurement and death. The good news is that most skin cancers can be cured – if they are found and treated early.

What are the most common types of skin cancer?

#### ***Basal cell carcinoma***

Basal cell carcinoma is the most frequent type of skin cancer. Fortunately, it rarely spreads to other parts of the body and is easy to treat. Basal cell carcinomas usually appear on the head or neck, where the most sunlight hits. It often looks like psoriasis or dermatitis, with small shiny firm nodules: crusty ulcerated lesions or flat scar-like hard patches that bleed. This type of skin cancer affects men more than women and usually occurs between ages 60 and 70.

### ***Squamous cell carcinoma***

Squamous cell carcinoma usually begins as a small red patch with a crusted surface. The lesions may become wart-like. With treatment, this form of skin cancer doesn't usually spread to other parts of the body.

### ***Malignant lentigo melanoma***

Malignant lentigo melanoma is a precancerous area on the skin, usually the face, that looks like a freckle. Most common in older people, these "freckles" can be brown or black and irregularly shaped.

### ***Malignant melanoma***

This is the most serious type of skin cancer because it can spread to other parts of the body so quickly that it can be fatal in just a few short months. Malignant melanoma develops from the melanin cells in the skin or from similar cells found in moles. It usually appears as a lesion that does not heal or as an existing mole that changes in color or size. If caught and treated early, melanoma can almost always be cured.

### ***Kaposi's sarcoma***

Kaposi's sarcoma is usually found in people with depressed immune systems and is found in more than 30% of people with AIDS. Tan to purple in color, it appears as plaques, papules, nodules, tumors or ulcers on the skin.

*Are you at risk for skin cancer?*

1. When you go into the sun, it is hard for you to get a tan? **Yes No**
2. Do you tend to sunburn easily? **Yes No**
3. Have any new moles appeared on your body after age 21? **Yes No**
4. Has any mole been changing? **Yes No**
5. Did you have a severe or blistering sunburn as a child? **Yes No**
6. Do you freckle in sunlight or have lots of freckles? **Yes No**
7. Do you have fair skin, hair or eye color? **Yes No**
8. Do you work outdoors? **Yes No**
9. Do you live where the sun's rays are more intense: (in a high elevation or the "sunbelt")? **Yes No**

*If you have answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may be at an increased risk for melanoma.*

Over-exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays is a main cause of skin cancer. Your chances of getting skin cancer are greater if you:

- have fair skin, light hair or blue eyes
- work outdoors
- live where sunlight is more intense (closer to the equator or higher elevations)
- have large multicolored or irregularly shaped moles
- have a history of skin cancer in your family

### The ABC's of Mole Dangers

**Asymmetry** – one side of the mole is different from the other

**Border irregularity** – the edge or border of the mole is jagged or notched

**Color variation** – the mole has various colors in it, like dark brown, black, blue, white, pink or red.

**Diameter** – the mole is more than 6mm (the width of a pencil eraser)

**Evolution** – the mole has been growing, or changing its shape or color

*What are the warning signs?*

- Don't wait for pain! Skin growths don't have to hurt to be dangerous. The following may all be early warning signs of skin cancer:
- A spot, freckle or mole that is darker, irregular or multi-colored
- A mole, birthmark, beauty mark or any brown spot over 6 mm (the width of a pencil eraser) that changes its size, shape or color, texture or thickness over time
- Any lesion, even without color, that becomes itchy, burns, softens or hardens, forms a scab, bleeds, becomes surrounded by red inflamed area and changes color size or shape
- A sore that continues to itch, hurt, crust, scab, erode or bleed and takes longer than 3 weeks to heal.

*What is the treatment?*

Treatment of skin cancer depends on the type of cancer, where it's found and how widespread it is. Patients with small uncomplicated lesions, like those seen with basal cell carcinoma, are usually treated in their doctor's office. A local anesthetic is used to numb the area and make the procedure painless. First, the lesion is scraped away with a curette. An electric needle is then used to stop the bleeding and burn away a small area of normal tissue around the lesion. Suspicious lesions that are larger usually need to be removed surgically with a scalpel and then analyzed under a microscope. If cancer has spread to other organs, additional treatment is commonly recommended.

## Instructions for Using Skin Growth Monitoring System

### *About the Test*

The **Health Check™** Skin Growth Monitoring System will help you discover and keep track of moles that may be early warning signs of skin cancer. It is designed to help you recognize possible problems and get treatment as early as possible.

### *Contents of the Monitoring Kit:*

- **“Your Skin”** booklet and instruction manual
- Skin Color Chart
- Measuring Fan
- Magnifier
- Body Maps
- The Skin Color Chart will help you determine the colors of your moles and if the colors change over time.
- The Mole Gauge will help you measure the size of your moles and if they get bigger over time.
- The Body Map is your record of the location of all your skin growths and whether they change in color, shape or size. You will use the same Body Map each time you use the monitoring kit. Each person in your family should have their own **Health Check™** Body Map. Each kit contains three (3) **Health Check™** Body Maps.

### **Directions**

1. Choose a well-lit room or use a bright handheld light to perform your self-examination (or to examine a family member).
2. Carefully look at your entire body surface. If you can't see any part of your body, use mirrors or ask someone to help you. You can begin with your head and work your way down. Make sure to check your scalp, behind your ears, your underarms, your genitals, beneath your fingers and toenails, between your toes and the bottom of your feet. Also, women should lift breasts to check beneath. When you get to your legs and feet, it might help to sit down and put your legs on a stool.
3. Record all moles on your Body Map. While you are examining your body, make a mark on the map that corresponds to where the mole actually is located.
4. Return to each mole that you found and review for ABC's.

The ABC's of Mole Dangers

**Asymmetry** – one side of the mole is different from the other

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Look through the magnifier and record your findings on your Body Map with the date of your examination:

- A. Are the two halves of the mole unequal in shape (Asymmetric)? If so, mark this on your Body Map.
  - B. Does the mole have a jagged border (Border Irregularity)? If so, mark this on your Body Map.
  - C. Take the **Health Check™** Color Chart, put it next to the mole and find the color that most closely matches the color of your mole. If the mole is multi-colored, you may have to move the chart to different parts of the mole, for exact color matches. Record the color or colors on your Body Map.
  - D. Take the Measuring Fan and find the smallest black circle that completely surrounds your mole. Record the size of your mole on the Body Map.
5. If you have a mole with any of the ABC's of Mole Dangers, see your doctor immediately. You can bring your **Health Check™** Body Map with you.
6. After completing your examination and marking everything on your **Health Check™** Body Map, take this simple test to learn more about your melanoma risk.

Your Mole Risk Score

Your Score (Circle one)

A.	Any Asymmetry	No = 0
		Yes = 1
B.	Any Border Irregularity	No = 0
		Yes = 1
C.	Color	One color = 0
		Two colors = 2
		Three or more colors = 2
		Black = 2
D.	Diameter	Less than 6mm = 0
		6mm or larger = 1
E.	Evolution	Change in A = 1
		Change in B = 1
		Change in C = 1
		Change in D = 1
	Total	-----

*YOUR MOLE RISK SCORE:*

0	=	Low Risk
1	=	Medium Risk
2	=	High Risk
3 or more	=	Very High Risk

7. Every three months, perform the same examination. Mark your calendar now as a reminder. When you re-examine, find the moles that are already on the Body Map and record the new date, along with any changes in size, color or shape. Also, mark down any new moles that were not seen during your last examination.

**Guidelines for Use**

Skin cancer is becoming much more common. Changes in our atmosphere threaten us with even more intense exposure to ultraviolet sunlight – a primary cause of skin cancer. Because of this, experts recommend regular self-examination for all people. Parents should teach their children self-examination, so they are in the habit of doing it themselves by the time they are teenagers. Self-monitoring is especially important for people more prone to developing skin cancer; those who have fair skin and hair, work outdoors, live in high risk sunny areas, have a family history of skin cancer or have any moles on their body. It is advisable to use the Health Check™ Skin Growth Monitoring System every three months. After the first few times, it should only take 10 to 15 minutes.

See Your Doctor

This monitoring kit can help you monitor your moles for signs of melanoma. It cannot be relied upon as a medical test and cannot be a substitute for an examination by a doctor. A suspicious mole should not be monitored at home. It should be evaluated by a doctor as soon as possible.

Proper Use and Storage

To avoid loss or damage, return all parts of the HealthCheck™ Skin Growth Monitoring System to the original box after each use and store in an easy-to-find place. You can bring your entire kit to your physician to show him/her your body map.

## HealthCheck™ Health Tips to Help Prevent Skin Cancer

- **SUN SENSE** Over exposure to sunlight is your greatest threat. Respect the strength and power of the sun's ultraviolet rays. During the sun's strongest hours (10 am-3pm), avoid prolonged exposure by staying inside or in the shade.
- **BLOCK OUT** Regularly apply protective sun screen with a "skin protection factor" (or SPF) of at least 15.
- **COVER UP** Wear polarized sunglasses, broad brimmed hats and protective clothing.
- **SUN-TAN** Forget the golden tan, whether it be from the sun or tanning beds.
- **KID SAFE** Protect your children against the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays as soon as they are old enough to play outdoors. Use sun blocks and cover-ups, and keep them indoors during peak sun hours.
- **MOLE PATROL** Moles are a major risk factor for cancer, so if you have moles, be sure to monitor them and see a dermatologist regularly.
- **CLOSE LOOK** Regular self-examination will help you discover potential problems early and allow you to get treatment quickly – the most important factor in curing skin cancer.

### ***Other Resources***

*The following organizations have a number of pamphlets as well as specialists on hand to answer your questions:*

*The Skin Cancer Foundation, 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016 (212)725 5176.*

*American Cancer Society (check your telephone book for local chapters) 1599 Clifton Road, NE, Atlanta, GA 30329 (404) 320 3333*

*National Institute of Health/National Cancer Institute, 9000 Rockville Pike, Building 31, Room 1A2A Bethesda, MD 20892 (800) 4-CANCER*

Please direct questions about this product and its use to:

**Health-Chem Diagnostics, LLC**  
**3341 SW 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Pompano Beach, FL 33069**  
**Telephone – 954 979 3845**  
**Fax – 954 979 7997**