

What to tell your clients

- 1 Don't panic!
It is important not to alarm clients.
- 2 Remember
You are not a doctor! Well-being, hair and beauty professionals are not expected to diagnose skin cancers.
- 3 Ask
Your clients if they are aware of the mole or lesion.
- 4 Signpost
Clients to public information about the signs of skin cancer and how to seek help.



For the PDF version of this leaflet and for further information, please visit www.bad.org.uk/sunawareness

Case study



Ray Vyse, a massage therapist, noticed a mole on his client's leg; "It had grown in size, had a darker appearance and an irregular shape". Without causing alarm, he suggested that she have it looked at by her doctor. In this instance the lesion was a malignant melanoma, and it was consequently removed.

Ray Vyse, MFHT

"Skcin has worked with Nottingham City Hospital NHS Trust on a pilot scheme which encourages awareness of skin cancer amongst hairdressers and beauty therapists. We applaud this initiative which we hope will build on the positive results of our previous work, leading to the early detection of skin cancers, ultimately saving lives."

Richard Clifford, Skcin

"GPs are the first point of contact for patients who are concerned about new, changing or worrying skin lesions. Hairdressers and other professionals may be the first to notice any of these changes on their clients and helpfully encourage them to seek their GP's advice."

Dr Stephen Hayes, GP, PCDS

About the Melanoma Taskforce



The Melanoma Taskforce is a panel of skin cancer experts, chaired by Siân James MP, brought together to look at how to improve the prevention and treatment of skin cancer.

About the British Association of Dermatologists (BAD)

The BAD is the professional organisation for dermatologists in the UK. It provides free patient information on skin diseases and runs a number of high profile campaigns, including Sun Awareness and a skin cancer early detection campaign.



The Taskforce includes representatives from the following groups:



The cost of administration of this project has been provided by Bristol-Myers Squibb who have no editorial control over its content.

Melanoma Taskforce

British Association of Dermatologists

Information on the signs of skin cancer for well-being, hair and beauty professionals



Endorsed by:



Purpose of the guidelines

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the UK and rates of melanoma, its deadliest form, have more than quadrupled in the last 30 years.

People working in the well-being, hair and beauty industries come into close contact with people's skin every day. This means that they are in a unique position to spot possible skin cancers.



As a professional in one of these industries you are not expected to diagnose skin cancers. However, you can play a vital role in noticing changes in your clients' skin and providing information about where they can go to seek medical advice.

It is vitally important that skin cancers are detected and treated early. Swift diagnosis and treatment of skin cancers like melanoma can save lives.

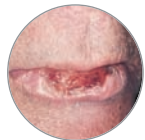
Non-melanoma skin cancer

The two most common forms of skin cancer are basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and squamous cell carcinoma (SCC).



Non-melanoma skin cancers vary greatly in their appearance but possible signs include:

- a scab or sore that won't heal
- a scaly red patch that won't go away
- a flesh coloured, pearly bump
- an area of thickening or a lump on the skin which is getting bigger



These lesions are most common on parts of the body that are regularly exposed to the sun, such as the head and neck (including the lips and ears) and the backs of the hands. They can also appear where the skin has been damaged by X-rays, and on old scars, ulcers, burns and persistent chronic wounds.



Most non-melanoma skin cancers can be effectively treated and cured, but treatment is generally more successful the earlier they are detected.

Melanoma

Melanoma is the most deadly type of skin cancer. In most cases, it is caused by over-exposure to UV light from the sun or sunbeds. If untreated, melanoma can spread to other parts of the body and it can be fatal. The earlier melanoma is detected and treated, the better the chances of a good outcome.



Skin cancers, including melanomas, can vary greatly in their appearance. These images do not represent a visual guide to identifying melanoma. People should inform their doctor about any changes to their moles or skin even if they are not the same as those shown here.

The ABCDE guide

The British Association of Dermatologists' ABCDE guide tells you a few of the signs in a mole that might indicate a melanoma:



Asymmetry **The two halves of the area may differ in their shape**



Border **The outside edges of the area may be irregular or blurred, and sometimes show notches or look ragged**



Colour **This may be uneven and patchy: different shades of black, brown and pink may be seen**



Diameter **Most, but not all, melanomas are at least 6mm in diameter. Advise your client to report any change in size or diameter to their doctor**



Expert **Look out for change, and check it out! Anyone can get a suspicious mole or patch of skin looked at free of charge through the NHS by visiting their GP**

If your client has noticed other changes in a mole such as enlargement, crusting, bleeding or itching, they should see their GP as soon as possible.

SKIN CANCER STATISTICS

- It is estimated that more than **100,000** new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed in the UK annually, making it the most common type of cancer.
- The **majority** of cases of skin cancer are **preventable**.
- The main cause of skin cancer is too much **UV light** from the sun or sunbeds.
- Skin cancer kills more than **2,500** people in the UK every year.
- Melanoma is one of the fastest rising types of cancer in young people aged **15-34**.

(Figures for 2008 published by Cancer Research UK)