

C

Colour...



- Common moles usually have a uniform colour. Colour variations with different shades of brown, and even black, pink, red and white, are often the first signs of malignant melanoma.



D

Diameter...



- The diameter of common moles is usually smaller than 6mm.

Malignant melanoma is usually, but not always, larger than 6mm. However, not every mole which is larger than 6mm should raise suspicion unless there are other signs!



Of pigmented skin lesions...



Evolution...

➤ Evolution in a pigmented lesion, that is a change in size, shape, or colour, or development of spontaneous irritation, inflammation or bleeding within a short period of time could also be a sign of melanoma.

E

...Pigmented skin lesions...

Common pigmented skin lesions or moles

Most people have a number of small pigmented spots on their skin: pigmented skin lesions, freckles, birth marks, moles. Usually a young adult has about 25 of these brown pigmented skin lesions. Only very few of these are present at birth, the majority appear over the years. Most moles are quite unalarming and remain so throughout life. However, a change within a mole or within another spot on the skin may be the first sign of some kind of skin cancer.

Malignant melanoma

Malignant melanoma is a dangerous form of skin cancer that originates in moles or in the pigment cells of the skin.

At an early stage, the cancer can be cured quite easily and is not life-threatening. At an advanced stage, malignant melanoma can spread to other organs. At this point the outcome of treatment is very uncertain. **One has a high risk of developing melanoma if:**

- one has already had malignant melanoma,
- one has a family history of malignant melanoma,
- one has multiple and irregular moles,
- one sunburns easily without tanning,
- one has been sunburnt during childhood and adolescence,
- one works indoors but seeks the sun for recreation.

ABCDE Rule

Regular self-examination is the best way to get familiar with the many moles on your skin. With the help of a family member or a friend, you can even check areas you cannot see yourself: the back, the scalp, the mouth...

Common moles and malignant melanoma do not look the same: their size, shape, borders and colour are quite different. To help remember these characteristics one could use the **ABCDE**-rule: **A**symmetry, **B**order, **C**olour, and **D**iameter. **E**volution in a pigmented lesion, that is a change in size, shape, or colour, or development of spontaneous irritation, inflammation or bleeding within a short period of time could also be a sign of melanoma. The pictures in this folder illustrate the early warning signs of malignant melanoma. If one of your moles shows these signs, we would strongly recommend you to consult a qualified doctor. When examining yourself, keep the **ABCDE**-rule in mind: in malignant melanoma, early detection is the most important step towards successful treatment.

Asymmetry...

A



- **Common moles are symmetrical: when you draw a dividing line through the middle, both halves look identical.**

Most malignant melanomas tend to be asymmetrical.



Border...

B



- **Common moles are smooth, with round or oval edges.**

Malignant melanoma often has irregular borders with indentations.

