



# SKIN | CANCER | FOCUS

## How to Check Your Own Skin

### Why self-checks are important:

Regularly checking your skin helps detect skin changes early, when skin cancers are easier to treat. Everyone should perform monthly skin checks.

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### Step 1: Set Up

- Choose a well-lit room with a full-length mirror and a hand-held mirror.
- Have a stool or chair if you need to check lower areas.
- Keep a notebook or phone ready to record any changes.

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### Step 2: Know What to Look For

Use the **ABCDE guide** for moles and spots:

- **A – Asymmetry:** One half doesn't match the other.
- **B – Border:** Irregular, jagged, or blurred edges.
- **C – Colour:** Uneven colour, multiple shades, or unusual colours.
- **D – Diameter:** Larger than 6mm (about the size of a pencil eraser).
- **E – Evolving:** Any change in size, shape, colour, or symptoms (itching, bleeding).

Also check for:

- New growths or sores that don't heal.
- Red, scaly patches or crusted areas.
- Painful or itchy spots.

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### Step 3: Systematic Check

1. **Face, ears, and neck:** Check all sides, including behind the ears.
2. **Scalp:** Use a comb to part hair and examine with a hand-held mirror.
3. **Torso and back:** Use a full-length mirror for front; hand mirror for back.
4. **Arms and hands:** Check underarms, palms, and fingernails.
5. **Legs and feet:** Check thighs, shins, soles, toenails, and between toes.
6. **Buttocks and genitals:** Don't forget less visible areas.

## Step 4: Track Changes

- Take photos of moles or spots for comparison over time.
- Note any changes in shape, size, or colour.

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## Step 5: When to See a Doctor

See a **skin specialist (dermatologist)** promptly if you notice:

- Any new, changing, or unusual spots.
- Sores that bleed, crust, or don't heal.
- Rapidly growing lumps or red patches.

**Remember:** Early detection saves lives. Monthly self-checks plus yearly professional skin exams are recommended, especially if you have fair skin, many moles, or a family history of skin cancer.