

Skin Cancer

The skin is the body's largest organ and is made up of three layers. Most skin cancers start in the top layer, known as the epidermis. Fortunately, skin cancer is highly preventable by limiting UV exposure — wearing protective clothing, applying sunscreen, and avoiding the sun during peak hours all help to reduce risk.

Statistics

- In 2026, an estimated 119,750 new cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed in the United States.
- An estimated 14,570 people will die from skin cancer in 2026.
- The five-year survival rate for melanoma overall is 95%, ranging from >99% for cases diagnosed at a localized stage to 35% for cases that have spread to distant parts of the body.
- In Texas, an estimated 5,910 new cases of melanoma are expected in 2026.

Risk Factors

There are several risk factors that can increase a patient's risk of developing skin cancer, such as:

- **Excess UV exposure:** Excess exposure to UV radiation via sunlight or indoor tanning beds increases the risk for most skin cancer types.
- **Moles:** Most moles are benign, but they can develop into melanoma. Identify warning signs using the ABCDE rule below.
- **Family history:** Patients with first-degree family members (parents, siblings, or children) with melanoma are at increased risk of developing the disease.

Symptoms

Skin cancer symptoms can vary from person to person, but some of the most important warning signs include:

- A new spot on the skin that is changing in size, shape, or color
- Existing moles that show any of the following ABCDE features:
 - A — Asymmetry: One half of the mole does not match the other.
 - B — Border: The edges appear irregular, blurred, or jagged.
 - C — Color: The mole contains multiple colors or uneven shades of black, brown, pink, red, white, or blue.
 - D — Diameter: The spot is larger than 6 millimeters (about the size of a pencil eraser), though some melanomas can be smaller.
 - E — Evolving: The mole is changing in size, shape, or color over time.

Prevention

There is no sure way to prevent skin cancer. However, you can take steps to lower your risk, such as:

- Staying away from tobacco
- Maintaining a healthy diet and weight
- Getting regular physical activity
- Avoiding or limiting alcohol
- Limiting exposure to harmful chemicals

Treatment Options

Depending on the stage of disease and the lesion's size and location, skin cancer may be treated with one or a combination of the following:

- Surgery
- Radiation therapy
- Topical medications
- Immunotherapy

About Texas Oncology

Founded in 1986, Texas Oncology is an independent, physician-led practice and a member of the US Oncology Network. With more than 550 physicians and 300 locations across Texas, Texas Oncology serves over 250,000 cancer patients each year.

Texas Oncology provides advanced care across 19 specialties and offers a comprehensive clinical trials and research program that has contributed to the development of more than 100 FDA-approved cancer therapies. Learn more at [TexasOncology.com](https://www.texasoncology.com).