

# Non-Melanoma

Basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) are the most common skin cancers. Both are caused primarily by long-term sun exposure and typically appear in those areas that are exposed to the sun. The rim of the ear and the lower lip are especially susceptible to SCC. Skin damaged by factors other than the sun may also be vulnerable to both cancers. These factors include burns and scars, open sores that resist healing, inflammatory skin conditions, and areas exposed to radiation or chemicals such as arsenic and petroleum by-products.

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BCCs and SCCs are easily treated when they are detected at an early stage. However, the larger a tumor grows, the more dangerous and potentially disfiguring it may become and the more extensive the treatment must be.

While BCCs seldom spread to vital organs, they can cause major damage-even the loss of an eye, ear, or nose. Certain rare forms can become lethal if not treated promptly.

In general, SCCs are more threatening than BCC's and have a much greater chance of spreading and becoming life threatening if untreated.

## Five Signs of BCC

These are the five most typical characteristics of BCC. Frequently, two or more of these features appear in the same tumor.



1. A shiny bump or nodule, that is pearly or translucent and is often pink, red or white. The bump can also be tan, black or brown, especially in dark haired people, and can be confused with a mole

2. An open sore that bleeds, oozes, or crusts and remains open for 3 or more weeks. A persistent, nonhealing sore is a very common sign of an early basal cell carcinoma.

3. A scar like area that is white, yellow or waxy and often has poorly defined borders. The skin itself appears shiny and taut. Although a less frequent sign than others, it can indicate the presence of an aggressive tumor.

4. A pink growth with a slightly elevated rolled border and a crusted indentation in the center. As the growth slowly enlarges, tiny blood vessels may develop on the surface.

5. A reddish patch or irritated area frequently occurring on the chest, shoulders, arms or legs. Sometimes the patch crusts. It may also itch or hurt. At other times, it persists with no noticeable discomfort.

### **Four Signs of SCC**

SCCs usually appear as thick, rough, scaly patches that may bleed if bumped. The skin around them typically shows signs of sun damage such as wrinkling, pigment changes, and loss of elasticity. They often appear as:



1. A wart-like growth that crusts and occasionally bleeds.

2. An open sore that bleeds and crusts and persists for weeks.

3. A persistent, scaly red patch with irregular borders that sometimes crusts or bleeds.

4. An elevated growth with a central depression that occasionally bleeds. It may rapidly increase in size.

To get additional information on non-melanoma please visit

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/skin>