

ABCDEs of Melanoma Identification

Melanoma is a life-threatening form of skin cancer. A monthly self-exam is a powerful way to identify it early on. The ABCDEs of Melanoma Identification is a guide to what to look for during your self-exam.



A_{symmetry}

Is the mole different on one side than the other?

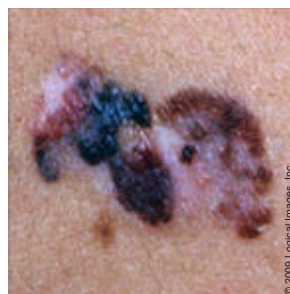
Normal moles are typically symmetrical, meaning if you divided the mole in half, the two sides match. If this is not the case, the mole is considered asymmetrical and should be checked by your doctor.



B_{order}

Does the mole have ragged edges?

Normal moles have smooth borders that have a distinct separation from surrounding skin. If the mole has a blotched or notched edge, it is considered to have an irregular border.



C_{olor}

Does the mole have dark colored areas?

Black or very dark colors could represent melanoma. Moles with varying shades of brown, blue, red, or black within the same mole also warrant a professional opinion.



D_{iameter}

Is the mole growing in size or larger than 6 mm?

Moles about the size of a pencil eraser or larger should be checked by your doctor, but any mole that is growing in size, black, itching, or bleeding, no matter what the size, should be examined by a professional.



E_{volving}

Has the mole changed size, color, or shape?

Normal moles will change size with the growth of the person. However, in an adult, any change of a mole in shape, color, or size should be reported to your doctor.