

Moles

Almost everyone has moles. An ordinary mole is an evenly colored brown, tan, or flesh colored spot in the skin. It can be round or oval with borders that are sharply defined. Moles are generally the size of a pencil eraser or less, approximately one quarter of an inch. Moles can be present at birth or develop later in life. Moles usually fade as the person gets older.

Most moles are harmless. A person who has many moles, irregular moles or large moles is at a higher risk of developing a certain type of skin cancer. It is a good health habit to become familiar with your skin by checking your skin from head to toe once a month.

Melanoma is a skin cancer that may begin in or near a mole or other dark spot on the skin. Knowing the **ABCD** rule can help you remember what changes in a mole or skin to report to your doctor.

ABCD RULE

What to report to your doctor

- **ASYMMETRY**

One half of the spot does not match the other half

- **BORDER IRREGULARITY**

Borders are uneven or notched

- **COLOR**

Several colors are present or an irregular pattern of colors appear within the spot

- **DIAMETER**

The spot measures more than 1/4 inch (larger than the size of a pencil eraser)

