

Basal cell carcinoma (BCC)

The most common and least dangerous type of skin cancer. It grows slowly and rarely spreads. BCC usually appears on the face as a small round lump, either red, pale or pearly in colour. If left untreated it may form deep ulcers.

Benign tumour

A tumour that is not a cancer. It grows slowly, and does not spread to other parts of the body like a cancer can.

Cancer

Uncontrolled growth and spread of abnormal cells.

Common skin cancer

This term refers to the two most common types of skin cancer, basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma.

Dermis

The underlying layers of the skin, containing hair follicles, fat cells and sweatglands.

Diagnosis

Identifying a disease by its symptoms, laboratory tests and other means of investigation.

Epidermis

The outermost layer of the skin, containing basal cells and squamous cells.

High risk

The above average possibility that a particular person or population group could contract a disease.

Immune

Protected or safe from disease.

Incidence

The number of new cases of a disease occurring in a population in a given time, usually a year.

Malignant

The spread of cancer cells to other parts of the body.

Malignant tumour

A cancer that grows uncontrollably and can spread to other parts of the body. If left untreated, it eventually leads to death.

Melanin

The brown pigment which gives skin its colour.

Melanocyte

The special cells in the epidermis of the skin which make melanin.

Melanoma

A very dangerous form of skin cancer. It can occur anywhere on the body and look like a mole or freckle to start with, but then begins a change in size, shape or colour. It can spread rapidly throughout body, but can usually be cured if it is found in the early stages.

Ozone layer

Ozone gas occurs naturally in the upper atmosphere, where it forms a layer that protects the Earth's surface by absorbing a large amount of harmful UV radiation.

Skin cancer

There are three main types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma. Skin cancer rates in Australia are higher than anywhere else in the world.

Solar keratoses

A slightly red, scaly area that appears on parts of the skin that are overexposed to sunlight, especially the face, hands and arms. A minority of keratoses develop into skin cancers.

Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC)

A relatively common form of skin cancer. It appears on areas of the body most often exposed to the sun and starts as scaling, red areas which grow rapidly. They bleed easily and may form ulcers or sores that don't heal.



Sun protection factor (SPF)

The Sun Protection Factor on a sunscreen is a guide to the amount of protection offered by the product. All Australian-made sunscreens carry a sun protection factor (SPF) number ranging from four to 30+.

Tumour

An abnormal growth of tissue on or in the body, formed by a collection of cells. A tumour may be benign (not a cancer) or malignant (a cancer).

Ultraviolet radiation (UV radiation)

The sun's harmful rays. UV radiation is made up of three parts UVA, UVB and UVC.

UVA—originally thought to be harmless but now believed to cause skin damage.

UVB—causes skin damage, sunburn and skin cancer.

UVC—none reaches the Earth's surface; it is absorbed by the ozone layers.

Contact **The Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20**