



**squamous
cell carcinoma**

**Brochures
and additional
information**

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squamous cell carcinoma

What is the single
most powerful
weapon in the fight
against skin cancer?

Information.



squamous cell carcinoma



How can we protect ourselves?

SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA is a major type of cancer that arises from the superficial layer (i.e., epithelium) of the skin and mucous membranes and occurs most commonly on areas exposed to the sun. If untreated, squamous cell carcinoma may penetrate and destroy underlying tissue. In a small percentage of cases, this tumor spreads (i.e., metastasizes) to distant organs and may be fatal.

Chronic sun exposure is the leading cause of squamous cell carcinoma, especially in people with fair skin, light hair and blue, green or grey eyes.

Other factors which may contribute to the development of this cancer include burns, scars, exposure to radiation or chemicals, chronic inflammatory conditions and immunosuppression. Although less likely to develop than in fair-skinned individuals, squamous cell carcinoma may occur in dark-skinned people, especially at sites of pre-existing inflammatory conditions or burns.

Signs which may indicate the presence of squamous cell carcinoma include scaly red patches, elevated growth with central depression, wart-like growths, nodules and open sores. All of these types of lesions may develop a crusted surface or bleed.

Because chronic overexposure to sunlight is the leading cause of squamous cell carcinoma, sun avoidance, especially during peak sunlight hours (i.e., 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) is an effective preventative measure to help reduce the risk of developing this skin cancer.

Limit skin exposure to the sun's harmful ultraviolet (invisible) rays by wearing sunglasses, broad-brimmed hats and protective, tightly woven clothing.

Furthermore, use a broad-spectrum sunscreen, rated SPF-15 or higher, on all exposed skin, including lips, even on cloudy days. Reapply sunscreen frequently. Additionally, avoid artificial tanning devices.

Inspect your entire body regularly for any skin changes, especially those already mentioned, and routinely visit your dermatologist for a skin examination.



What are the treatment options?

After being examined by your dermatologist, a diagnosis of squamous cell carcinoma is confirmed with a biopsy. This procedure consists of removing a portion of tissue, which is then examined by a dermatopathologist under a microscope. If cancer is confirmed, treatment is required. Several effective methods are available to treat this tumor. Your physician's choice of therapy depends on the size, location, depth of penetration and type of squamous cell carcinoma encountered. The patient's age and general health are also taken into consideration. The more common treatment options include excisional surgery, electrosurgery, radiation therapy and Mohs surgery (microscopically controlled surgery). Your dermatologist will discuss these treatment options with you.

Don't become a statistic.

Squamous cell carcinoma is the second most-common skin cancer (basal cell carcinoma being the most frequent), affecting more than 100,000 Americans each year. However, when properly treated, the cure rate for squamous cell carcinoma is approximately 95 percent. The incidence of developing squamous cell carcinoma increases with age, and these lesions tend to occur more often in males than females. A person who has had one squamous cell carcinoma has an increased chance of developing another. Additionally, an individual who has previously had basal cell carcinoma has an increased chance of developing squamous cell carcinoma.