

Save Your Skin!

Skin is the largest organ of the human body! Taking care of your skin is crucial to your health. This includes knowing how to care for your skin, learning signs and symptoms of trouble, and seeing a dermatologist for check-ups and if you have questions or concerns about your skin. Dermatologists protect and treat people with all skin types and conditions.



Fast facts about your skin:

- The epidermis is the outer layer of skin, which constantly renews itself. It protects the body from disease as part of the immune system, keeps organs safe from outside conditions, and can show signs of serious internal illnesses.
- Health issues can show up on the skin. Examples of inflammatory skin diseases include acne, psoriasis, and eczema. Diseases such as psoriasis are a result of the immune system making too many white blood cells, leading to extra skin cells.
- Melanin gives skin color. More melanin makes skin darker, less makes it lighter. Melanin also determines hair and eye color. Melanin amounts are primarily determined by genes, but aging, diet, and sun exposure can influence melanin production as well.
- Tanning beds, tanning booths, and sun lamps are not safe and can increase your cancer risk.
- Sunscreen should be applied every day on skin not covered by clothing if you will be outside. The sun emits harmful UV rays year round. Even on cloudy days, up to 80% of the sun's harmful UV rays can penetrate the clouds. Water, snow, and sand reflect dangerous UV rays of sunlight, increasing the chance of sunburn.

The ABCDE skin check for melanoma can save your life.

If you notice any of these signs, see a dermatologist or your doctor to rule out melanoma, a type of skin cancer.

A is for Asymmetry

One half of the spot is unlike the other half.

B is for Border

The spot has an irregular, scalloped, or poorly defined border.

C is for Color

The spot has varying colors from one area to the next, such as shades of tan, brown or black, or areas of white, red, or blue.

D is for Diameter

While melanomas are usually greater than 6 millimeters, or about the size of a pencil eraser, when diagnosed, they can be smaller.

E is for Evolving

The spot looks different from the rest or is changing in size, shape, or color.

Signs of common skin conditions for all skin types:

- Acne - blackheads, whiteheads, and pimples that can occur at any age
- Eczema - inflamed, irritated, and often very itchy skin that can occur at any age
- Psoriasis - scaly plaques caused by the skin making skin cells too quickly
- Hives - itchy welts caused by allergies, cold or hot temperatures, or a medical condition

Need help? See a dermatologist.

Dermatologists are doctors who treat disorders and diseases of the skin, hair, and nails, including everything from hives to skin cancer that happen to people of all skin types. They also perform surgery, give injections, and provide laser treatments to care for and cure various skin conditions and diseases. Dermatologists use their training to improve a patient's quality of life and even save lives.

Check out "Diseases and Conditions: A to Z" to learn more about the many ways dermatologists help their patients stay healthy: aad.org/public/diseases/a-z. If you're interested in learning more about opportunities in dermatology, visit aad.org/member/career/diversity/diversity-pathways-hs-college.

