



York Teaching Hospital  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Skin Self-Examination

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

**Skin Cancer Nurse Service**

York hospital and Scarborough hospital patients

Telephone: 01904 721719

Email: [macskinmail@york.nhs.uk](mailto:macskinmail@york.nhs.uk)



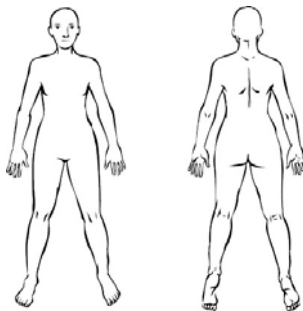
<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Why are skin self-examinations important? .....	4
Who should do it? .....	5
When should you do it? .....	5
How to do a skin self-examination? .....	6
Tell us what you think of this leaflet .....	11
Teaching, training and research.....	11
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).....	11
Leaflets in alternative languages or formats .....	12

# Why are skin self-examinations important?

Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers. It often affects adults with a fair complexion who have had a lot of sun exposure and repeated episodes of sunburn over many years.

Skin cancer is also the easiest cancer to cure, if it is diagnosed and treated early. However, if it is left it will grow larger, which can result in disfigurement and can be life threatening. This will depend on the type of skin cancer that has been diagnosed.

Please speak to your doctor or skin cancer nurse specialist to ensure you understand what type of skin cancer you have been diagnosed with.



## **Who should do it?**

A skin self-examination should be performed by your dermatology doctor when you attend your hospital appointment. The skin cancer nurse specialist may also have checked your skin and will show you how to do this yourself. If you have children you can also teach them from an early age how to do it themselves.

## **When should you do it?**

Skin examinations should be done often, but not so you feel it is a chore. For most people every three months is ideal. If you are a person with many moles or dark pigments on the skin, get a relative or friend to take some photographs. This will help you to verify if any changes have occurred. After the first few times, skin examination should take no longer than ten minutes.

## How to do a skin self-examination?

The easiest way to examine your skin is in front of a full-length mirror. You may also use a hand-held mirror to check every inch of your skin.



If you have access to the internet you may wish to view the following video. This video presents a visual step by step demonstration showing how to carry out a full skin self- examination. This video can be found at the following link <https://www.dermnetnz.org/topics/self-skin-examination-video>. [Accessed July 2020]

First check your body at the front and the back then raise both arms to enable you to look at both sides.



Next bend your elbows and have a close look at your forearms and upper underarms. You should also remember to examine your hands including the palms and finger nails.

Check the back of your legs and your feet. Don't forget to look in between your toes and on the soles of your feet. You may find it easier to do this whilst you are sitting.





Look at your face, neck and scalp. You may find it useful to use a comb or hair dryer to move your hair so that you can see better.



Finally, use a hand mirror to check your buttock area, and include the genital area as well.



If you check yourself regularly, you will become familiar with what is normal for you. Remember, you are checking for anything new, such as a change in colour, size or texture. Or you might want to look out for any sore that does not heal.

**If you have any questions please call the Skin Cancer Nurse Specialist: 01904 721719.**

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:  
Skin Cancer Nurse Specialist, The York Hospital,  
Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE, telephone  
01904 721719 or email [macskinmail@york.nhs.uk](mailto:macskinmail@york.nhs.uk)

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [pals@york.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@york.nhs.uk).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

Please telephone or email if you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio.

如果你要求本資 不同的 或 式提供 , 電  
或發電

Jeżeli niniejsze informacje potrzebne są w innym języku lub formacie, należy zadzwonić lub wysłać wiadomość e-mail

Bu bilgileri değişik bir lisanda ya da formatta istiyorsanız lütfen telefon ediniz ya da e-posta gönderiniz

Telephone: 01904 725566

Email: [access@york.nhs.uk](mailto:access@york.nhs.uk)

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