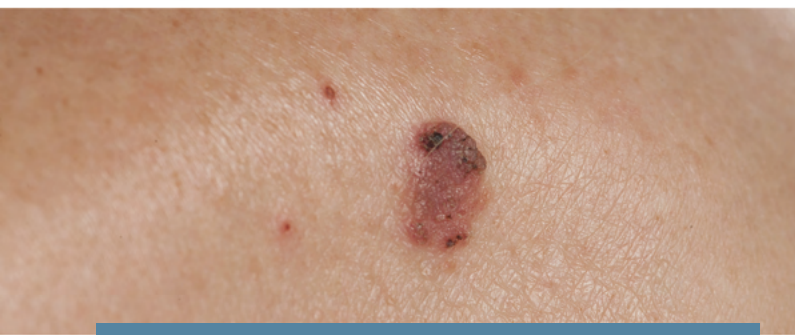


SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA

Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), the second most common form of skin cancer, is a growth of abnormal cells that form in the epidermis, the outer layer of the skin. SCCs appear as red and scaly patches, open sores, warts, or as elevated growths with a central depression. These lesions may bleed or develop a crust on their surface.



- SCCs can occur anywhere on the body, including mucous membranes, but are mostly present on the areas exposed to the sun like the face and arms.
- Cumulative effects of chronic exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays are the primary cause of SCCs.
- People with fair skin and light-colored eyes and hair are at the highest risk, but SCC can affect anyone, especially those with a history of substantial sun exposure. Other contributing factors may include: a weakened immune system, inflammatory skin conditions, burns, scars, and radiation or chemical exposure. Males are three times more likely to develop SCC than females.
- If SCCs are detected at an early stage and treated appropriately, they are almost always curable and cause minimal damage. If left untreated, SCCs can invade and penetrate the underlying tissue and cause disfiguring. They can also metastasize (spread to the bloodstream, lymph nodes, and organs) and, in a small percentage of cases, be fatal.



Reducing the risk of SCC



Avoiding overexposure to sunlight.

Following sun protection guidelines can help reduce the risks associated with atypical nevus, especially between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm when the sun is directly overhead. It is important to remember that, even on overcast days, damaging ultraviolet rays can pass through clouds. Use caution when around water, sand, and snow because all can reflect the sun's rays.



Taking protective measures.

Wear broad-brimmed hats, tightly-woven clothing, and sunglasses.



Use sunscreen.

Choose a sunscreen with minimum SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of 30 with protection from both UVA and UVB rays. Reapply often on all exposed skin, including the lips.



Always avoid artificial tanning devices and tanning salons.



Check your skin regularly.

Examine your entire body, and report any suspicious lesions to your dermatologist.