

Patient Information

## Dermatology and Plastic Surgery

# Melanoma in situ

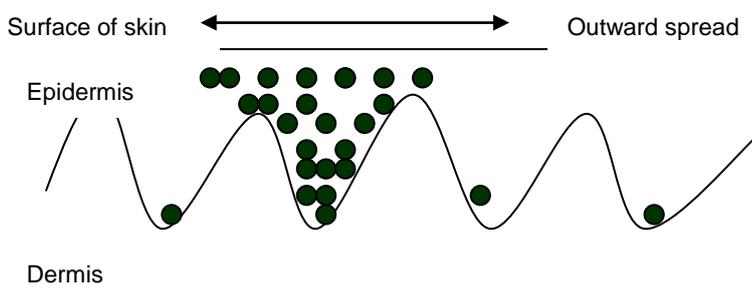
This information leaflet is for patients and patient's families who have been told by the specialist that they have had a melanoma in situ.

The leaflet will help you to understand the condition and give you information on further treatment and aftercare advice.

If you need more help or advice, you can contact:

- The Macmillan Skin Cancer Specialist Nurses on Tel **024 7696 6085** for **both Coventry and Rugby**
- Macmillan Skin Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist based at George Elliot hospital on **024 7686 5455**.

### What is melanoma in situ?



Melanoma in situ is the earliest stage of melanoma skin cancer and is generally regarded as pre-cancerous.



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It does not have the potential to spread anywhere in the body but affects the pigment-producing cells or melanocytes in the upper layer of the skin.

These cells produce natural pigment and appear on the skin's surface as a mole. Changes in shape, size or colour of a mole can indicate cancerous changes in these cells. Although the cause is not fully understood, sun exposure is a major contributing factor.

Patients with melanoma in situ have melanoma cells only in the top layer of skin. Although these are cancerous, they have not started to invade deeper into the skin.

### **Do I need more treatment?**

Melanoma in situ is treated by removal of the abnormal area of skin, which you may have had already. However, we aim to take a border of healthy tissue around the melanoma to make sure all the cancerous cells have been removed, and this may mean you will require further surgery. Once this is completed you should not require any more treatment.

### **Will I need further follow up care?**

Routinely, you do not require any follow up visits in the hospital.

However a diagnosis of melanoma or melanoma in situ at any stage means your risk of getting another is higher than average. You will therefore be offered the chance to see the Macmillan skin cancer specialist nurse who will give you advice on sun protection, how to check your moles, and they will undertake a holistic needs assessment to see if you have any other concerns we may be able to help with.

### **How can I prevent further problems?**

A diagnosis of melanoma in situ means that you have a higher than average risk of developing another melanoma in the future. You **must** take care in the sun and always have any new or changing mole reviewed by your doctor.

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### **You should:**

- Avoid sunburn
- Wear loose fitting woven clothes and wide brimmed hats
- Wear sunglasses. Look for glasses with the label for the CE Mark and British Standard UV 400 label and 100% UV protection written on the label/sticker and protection at the side of the eye.
- Use high factor sun cream, at least SPF 30 when out in the sun, and also has a 4 or 5 star rating.
- Avoid sun exposure during the hours of 11am to 3pm and seek shade
- UV rays can penetrate water. Wear a light t-shirt that does not become transparent in water
- Never use a sun bed

Remember there is no such thing as a healthy tan. It is just a sign that your skin is damaged and causes premature ageing. **Become a mole watcher and check your skin monthly.**

### **Look for moles that are:**

- Getting bigger
- Changing shape particularly if getting an irregular edge
- Changing colour, darkening in colour or different shades
- Bleeding or becoming crusty
- Itchy or painful or looking inflamed

If you have any of these symptoms see your doctor straight away.

### **Useful Information Sources**

The following provides further information if required:

**Cancer Research UK**      [www.cancerresearch.org.uk](http://www.cancerresearch.org.uk)

Free phone: 0808 800 4040 from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

**Macmillan Cancer Support**      [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

## Patient Information

Free phone on 0808 808 0000 from 9am to 8pm Monday to Friday

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6085 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email [feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk](mailto:feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk)

### Document History

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