



LEARN ABOUT  
EARLY DETECTION  
OF SKIN CANCER

**MOST SPOTS ARE  
HARMLESS.  
YOUR GP OR  
DERMATOLOGIST  
CAN TELL YOU WHICH  
SPOTS AREN'T.**

INFORMATION FOR OUR PATIENTS

## FREE EARLY DETECTION OF SKIN CANCER FOR THE OVER 35S

Skin cancer is one of the most common skin ailments in Germany. Every year over 260,000 people are newly diagnosed with skin cancer, 30,000 of them with the more serious malignant melanoma. Skin cancer responds well to treatment if detected early.

If you are over 35 and are covered by a statutory health plan, you are entitled to a free skin-cancer check-up every two years by a qualified GP or dermatologist.

With some health plans eligibility for free skin-cancer scans begins even earlier.

The aim of the check-up is to identify skin cancer as early as possible. The reason for this is that malignant melanoma spreads rapidly and is quick to create tumours in other organs (metastases).

## WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CHECK-UP?

### 1 CONSULTATION

The examination is carried out by dermatologists and specially trained GPs. The doctor begins by asking you a few questions – this is called the anamnesis. For instance, you will be asked whether any family members have had skin cancer and whether you have recently noticed any changes in your skin condition.

### 2 EXAMINATION

The doctor will then examine all areas of your skin from head to toe. This will require you to successively remove all items of clothing. Please refrain from applying make-up, nail polish, or hair gels/sprays on the day or from wearing your hair in buns or ponytails, as the examination will include the face, nails and scalp.

### 3 FEEDBACK

Finally the doctor tells you the results of the examination, provides information on your personal level of skin-cancer risk and gives tips on how to protect your skin.

If your GP carries out the skin-cancer check-up and discovers something out of the ordinary, he will refer you to a dermatologist, who will examine you again and may take a tissue sample. Only a laboratory test can ascertain whether cancerous cells are present. When the results are available, your dermatologist will discuss the findings with you and begin a course of treatment if relevant.

## HELPING TO PREVENT SKIN CANCER

One of the major potential causes of skin cancer is over-exposure to UV rays (sunlight, solariums, ...). This risk can be minimised:

- Protect your skin with clothing and headwear.
- Use UV-A or UV-B sunscreen with a protection factor appropriate for your skin type (25 to 50). Apply regularly.
- Avoid the strong midday sun between 11am and 3pm.
- Do not leave children out in the sun, as their skin is particularly sensitive.
- Examine your own skin once a month, looking out for any changes in its condition. The ABCDE Rule may help.

## KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR SKIN TIPS ON EXAMINING YOUR SKIN

You know your body better than anyone else. Examine your skin carefully once a month, looking for any alterations in appearance. The ABCDE Rule will help you judge whether a pigmentation mark – otherwise known as a mole or liver spot – needs medical attention. Consult a dermatologist or qualified GP if you discover a dark spot displaying one or more of the following characteristics:

- A** for Asymmetry: A benign liver spot is normally round or oval or elongated in form. Malignant melanomas are usually irregular and asymmetrical in shape.
- B** for Border: A spot with a blurred or otherwise unclear margin can be a sign of a malignant melanoma. Look out for non-clear-cut, jagged, uneven or rough edges.
- C** for Colour: The pigmentation of a mole is a consistent colour throughout. Variations in shade and differences in brightness within a particular mole should be investigated.
- D** for Diameter: Have a doctor examine pigmentation marks that are wider than 5mm in diameter.
- E** for Evolution: Consider if the pigmentation mark has changed since your last self-examination.

### Nationwide doctor search

Looking for a doctor or psychotherapist? Our online nationwide search facility is available at [www.116117.de](http://www.116117.de). The Associations of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians update their data on doctors continuously.

## THE ASSOCIATIONS OF STATUTORY HEALTH INSURANCE PHYSICIANS AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATUTORY HEALTH INSURANCE PHYSICIANS

In Germany more than 175,000 physicians and psychological psychotherapists are responsible for the medical treatment of outpatients. As their organisations the Associations of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians (KVen) ensure that everything runs smoothly:

- They conclude contracts on outpatient treatment for all accredited physicians and psychotherapists with all statutory health insurance schemes. Thus patients can go and see any physician or psychotherapist, regardless which health insurance scheme they have chosen.
- They guarantee outpatient treatment around the clock.
- They examine the qualifications of the SHI-authorized physicians and psychotherapists, check the medical equipment as well as the quality of the examinations.

The umbrella organisation of the 17 Associations of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians (KVen) in Germany is the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians (KBV).

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