

SKIN CANCER

What to look out for!

There are two main types of skin cancer, malignant melanomas and non-melanoma skin cancers.

Malignant melanomas – This is the most serious and dangerous type of skin cancer. They grow rapidly, spread early and can be fatal. They usually arise from freckles or moles. The warning signs to look out for are **any one of the following three major signs**:

A mole or freckle that is getting bigger (**changing in size**).

Or A mole or freckle that is **changing in shape**:

most moles are round or oval with a symmetrical shape. When a mole develops an irregular border it is a bad sign.

Or A mole or freckle that is **changing in colour**: most moles are an

even shade of light or dark brown. When a mole develops irregular shades of colour it is a bad sign.

If any of your moles develop **any one** of the above signs you should contact Dr. Buckley immediately as early detection and removal of a malignant melanoma can be life saving.

Other **minor warning signs** to look out for in a mole or a freckle are as follows:

- Itch
- Size greater than the head of a pencil (i.e. >7mm)
- Bleeding or crusting
- Inflammation.

Non-melanoma skin cancers - These include basal cell carcinomas (BCC) and squamous cell carcinoma (SCC). SCCs grow slowly and rarely spread beyond the skin unless they are neglected for a long time. BCC's can never spread beyond the skin no matter how long they are present so they are not fatal. However, they can spread locally within the skin and cause troublesome ulcers or damage local structures such as the eyes, ears or lips.

The warning signs to look out for are as follows:

- A new growth on the skin, which appears for no apparent reason.
- A sore or an ulcer that will not heal after two to four weeks.
- A persistent isolated scaly patch on the skin that does not clear up with topical creams.

If you have any of these warning signs please get Dr. Buckley to check your skin.