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How to Check Your Moles at Home

By Carina Wolff | June 27, 2016



Everyone has moles, including yourself. You've probably had a few moles for years and haven't given it second thought, but now might be a good time to whip out that mirror and take a closer look. Although most moles are harmless, some can end up being cancerous, so you need to make sure you're on your A-game when it comes to spotting these bad boys.

However, as important as it is to pay attention to your moles, this doesn't mean you need to obsessively examine your body everyday. "You should check your moles monthly," says dermatologist [Dr. Soheil Simzar](#). "Have someone take a look at your back, as well, or try using two mirrors to get a better visual of your back." If you're not exactly sure what to look for, here's a quick guide on what to pay attention to when you're doing a basic mole check.

Moles That Have Gotten Darker

Any moles that have darkened over time or look like a deep brown or black should get checked out. Additionally, if your moles vary in color, including multiple shades of black, brown, white, red, or blue, you'll want to have them looked at, as well.

Moles That Have Grown

If a mole has gotten larger over time, or is significantly larger than your other existing moles, you should see a dermatologist. You also want to pay close attention to moles that have a diameter larger than that of a pencil eraser.

Sores That Don't Heal

“Look for any ‘sore’ or lesion that just doesn’t heal and persists for more than several weeks,” says Simzar. “Minor skin cancers usually manifest as slowly-growing, pink-red, rough or smooth lesions that stick around longer than typical in-grown hairs or acne.”

Moles That Are Irregular

Look for moles with asymmetric shapes or that have scalloped or poorly defined borders.

Moles That Are Itchy and Painful

If you have a mole that hurts, becomes itchy, or starts to bleed, you’ll want to see a doctor as soon as possible.

To keep track of your moles, Simzar recommends taking monthly photos on your phone. “Simply set a reminder to take photos of your moles on the first of each month and make a folder in your photo album on your phone to store the photos,” says Simzar. “You can then compare monthly photos to monitor for changes.”

All this information might seem super scary or daunting, but most moles are innocent and won’t need to be removed. However, if you do see anything that seems suspicious, you should make an appointment to see your dermatologist just to make sure.

xx, The FabFitFun Team

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