



SKINCANCER
FOUNDATION
OF SOUTH AFRICA
www.skincancerfoundation.co.za

Basal Cell

Carcinoma (BCC)

BASAL CELL CARCINOMA (BCC)

BCC is the most common form of cancer in the world and affects mainly adults.

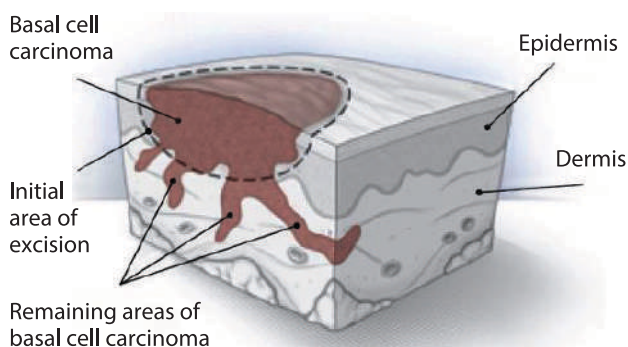
WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

BCC is most commonly caused by long-term sun exposure. Living in a sunny country, especially those with fair skin are most at risk. Those that have already had one BCC have a 40% risk of getting a second BCC within 5 years, and are at increased risk of malignant melanoma (an even more dangerous skin cancer).

HOW SERIOUS IS BCC?

Although BCC does not metastasize or travel in the bloodstream to other organs, it is important to remember that it is a cancer and can be quite destructive. As such, it will continue to grow locally and will not go away on its own. It is even more serious should it be located near important organs such as eyes, the nose and ears, and could potentially destroy these organs if left untreated.

THE TROUBLE WITH BASAL CELL CARCINOMA



Basal cell skin cancer usually isn't life threatening and it rarely spreads to other parts of the body, but it can cause trouble in its immediate vicinity. That's because it tends to grow downward and outward below the skin's surface. Consequently, there may be much more to it than strikes the eye, and a first pass at removing it (are within the dotted line) may not get it all.



PREVENTION

Sun damage starts in childhood and poor protection puts children at risk for skin cancer later in life. However, you are never too old to practice sun safe behaviour.

- Avoid excessive sunlight exposure, particularly between 10am and 4pm.
- Wear sun-protective clothing, wide-brimmed hat and good sunglasses.
- Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher. Apply 30 mins before exposure and reapply every 90 mins when outdoors (even on cloudy days).

Eucerin®

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

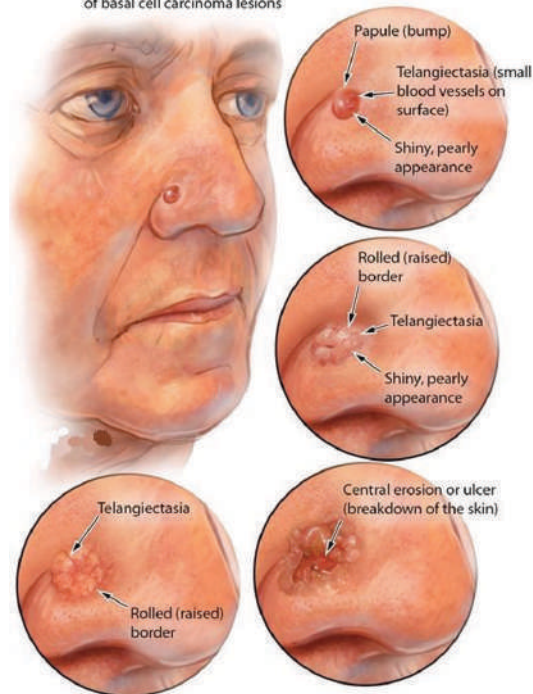
BCC normally appears on sun exposed areas such as face, scalp, ears, chest, back and legs. Most commonly it looks like a small dome-shape that has a pearly white colour, and may have blood vessels on the surface.

It can also emerge as a pimple-like growth that seems to heal, but then reappears time and again. Less commonly, it looks like a smooth white or yellowish waxy scar.

The clearest sign of all is a sore that heals only to continuously reappear. Any non-healing wound should be considered suspicious. And very seldom do they have any other symptoms like pain. It is advisable to have any new lump or bump/sore be seen to by an expert as BCC's are very common findings.

After an examination by a dermatologist, it is likely a biopsy will be performed to confirm if you have BCC. He may also be able to confirm this with a dermatoscope (skin microscope).

Typical appearances and characteristics of basal cell carcinoma lesions



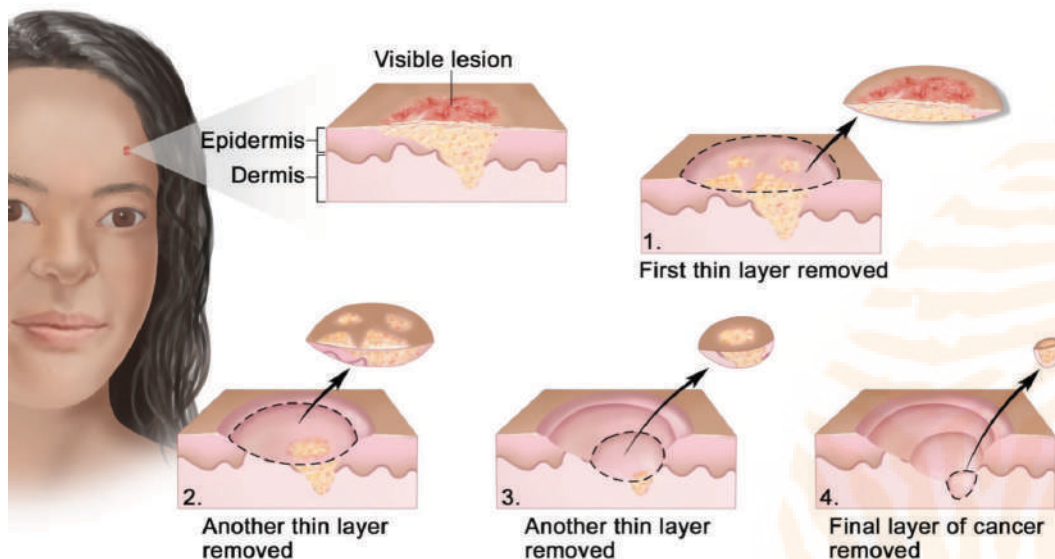
TREATMENT OPTIONS AVAILABLE

- Electrodesiccation and Curettage (ED&C) - Here surface of the skin cancer is removed and base gently burned or cauterized with an electric needle.
- Cryosurgery, Radiation Therapy and Laser Surgery – Seldom can be used in specific circumstances.
- Surgical Excision – This is the treatment of choice for BCC's (2x types of surgery).

1. Conventional surgery: The skin cancer is cut out and the wound closed using cosmetic surgical techniques. Tissue is sent off to the lab to confirm complete removal.

2. Mohs Surgery: This is a technique where the skin cancer is removed and microscopic sections are prepared on slides while you wait. The surgeon himself checks the excised tissue under the microscope to ensure complete removal before commencing with the reconstruction and closure. The technique is favourable in that a minimum amount of tissue is removed and all the edges of the specimen are studied carefully. This is used for specific indications i.e. cosmetically sensitive sites like ears, noses, lips, eyelids and also for any reoccurring BCC. It is undoubtedly the best choice to ensure complete cancer removal and offers a more than 98% clearance rate compared to conventional surgery of around 85%.

MOHS SURGERY



© 2020 Terese Winslow LLC
U.S. Govt. has certain rights