

# How to spot skin cancer

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The American Academy of Dermatology kicked off its 68th annual meeting on March 5 in Miami Beach, Florida. As with most medical meetings, research is introduced and findings are announced so I've been seeing a lot of dermatology stories come across the wire.

In a presentation on recent advances in technology that are helping doctors diagnose melanoma, Harold S. Rabinovitz, MD, FAAD, volunteer professor in the department of dermatology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine said, "The technological advances in melanoma detection in the future will significantly improve our ability to detect early melanomas and help save countless lives. However, keeping a vigilant eye on our skin for any changes that could signal a problem is an irreplaceable first step in the process."

How do you do that? The Academy sponsors [a great website](#) to help. This website gives directions on how to perform a self-exam, how to find a dermatologist, and information on free screenings. It also has a very helpful tool, [the body mole map](#), that defines the ABCDEs of melanoma detection (Asymmetry, Border, Color, Diameter, and Evolving) with images.

Although less than 5 percent of skin cancer cases are diagnosed as melanoma, it causes the majority of skin cancer deaths, according to the American Cancer Society. And unlike other cancers, melanoma occurs in the young and the old, and is one of the more common cancers that strikes young adults and adolescents. So don't forget the sunscreen, but more importantly, don't forget to self-exam and teach your children how to as well.