

Why skin cancer checks are even more important for Hispanic people

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When Hispanic people get a skin cancer diagnosis, their tumors are

about 17% larger than those of white people, researchers say.

According to the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD), [skin](#) cancer is often diagnosed at a more [advanced stage](#) in people with black and brown skin, leading to worse results. This makes it especially important to know the signs of skin cancer.

"Patients and the [medical community](#) need to be cognizant that skin cancer can develop in patients regardless of their race and ethnicity," said study co-author Dr. Laura Blumenthal, a dermatologist in Thousand Oaks, Calif., and colleagues.

Their research found that Mohs micrographic surgery defect sizes—an approximation of tumor size—were larger in Hispanic patients than in white patients and noted disparities in all skin cancer types.

Defect sizes of squamous cell carcinomas were 80% larger than defect sizes of basal cell carcinomas in Hispanic patients. By comparison, in white patients, defect sizes of squamous cell carcinomas were only 25% larger than [defect](#) sizes of basal cell carcinomas.

The findings were published Oct. 5 in the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*.

To find cancer early, the AAD said everyone should do regular skin self-exams and look for the warning signs of melanoma, easily remembered as ABCDE.

A is for asymmetry, when one half of the spot is unlike the other half.

B is for border, when the spot has an irregular, scalloped or poorly defined border.

C is for color. The spot has varying colors from one area to the next, such as shades of tan, brown or black, or areas of white, red or blue.

D is for diameter. Melanomas—the deadliest skin [cancer](#)—are usually greater than 6 millimeters, about the size of a pencil eraser when they're diagnosed, though they can be smaller.

E is for evolving because the spot looks different from the rest or is changing in size, shape or color.

If you notice any new or suspicious spots on your skin, or any spots that are changing, itching or bleeding, see a board-certified dermatologist.

The most preventable risk factor for [skin cancer](#) is unprotected UV exposure, so always seek shade, wear sun-protective clothing and apply a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher, the academy recommends.

More information: The American Cancer Society has more on [melanoma](#).

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