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# Healthy Bytes

## What causes skin cancer?

Although there is not an exact cause for melanoma skin cancer, certain risk factors are linked to the disease. The good news is, the number one cause of skin cancer is something you can control: too much exposure to sun and ultraviolet (UV) radiation.<sup>1</sup> Protect yourself from harmful rays whenever possible and avoid tanning lamps and booths.

You should also be aware of the following risk factors you can't control. **You are at an increased risk for melanoma skin cancer if you have:**<sup>2</sup>

- A lot of moles
- Fair skin, freckling, or red or blond hair
- A family history of melanoma
- A suppressed immune system
- A past history of melanoma

Although skin cancer does not discriminate, it is more likely to happen to older people and is more frequently found in males. Make sure you're doing everything you can to protect your skin!

- <sup>1</sup> "Skin Conditions: Sun Safety Tips." *WebMD*. Reviewed by doctors at The Cleveland Clinic Department of Dermatology. Edited by Charlotte Grayson, MD. April 2005. <<http://www.webmd.com/content/article/117/112586.htm>>.
- <sup>2</sup> "What Causes Melanoma Skin Cancer?" *American Cancer Society*. Revised 3/10/2006. <[http://www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI\\_2\\_2\\_2X\\_What\\_causes\\_melanoma\\_skin\\_cancer\\_50.asp?sitearea=>](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI_2_2_2X_What_causes_melanoma_skin_cancer_50.asp?sitearea=>)>.



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