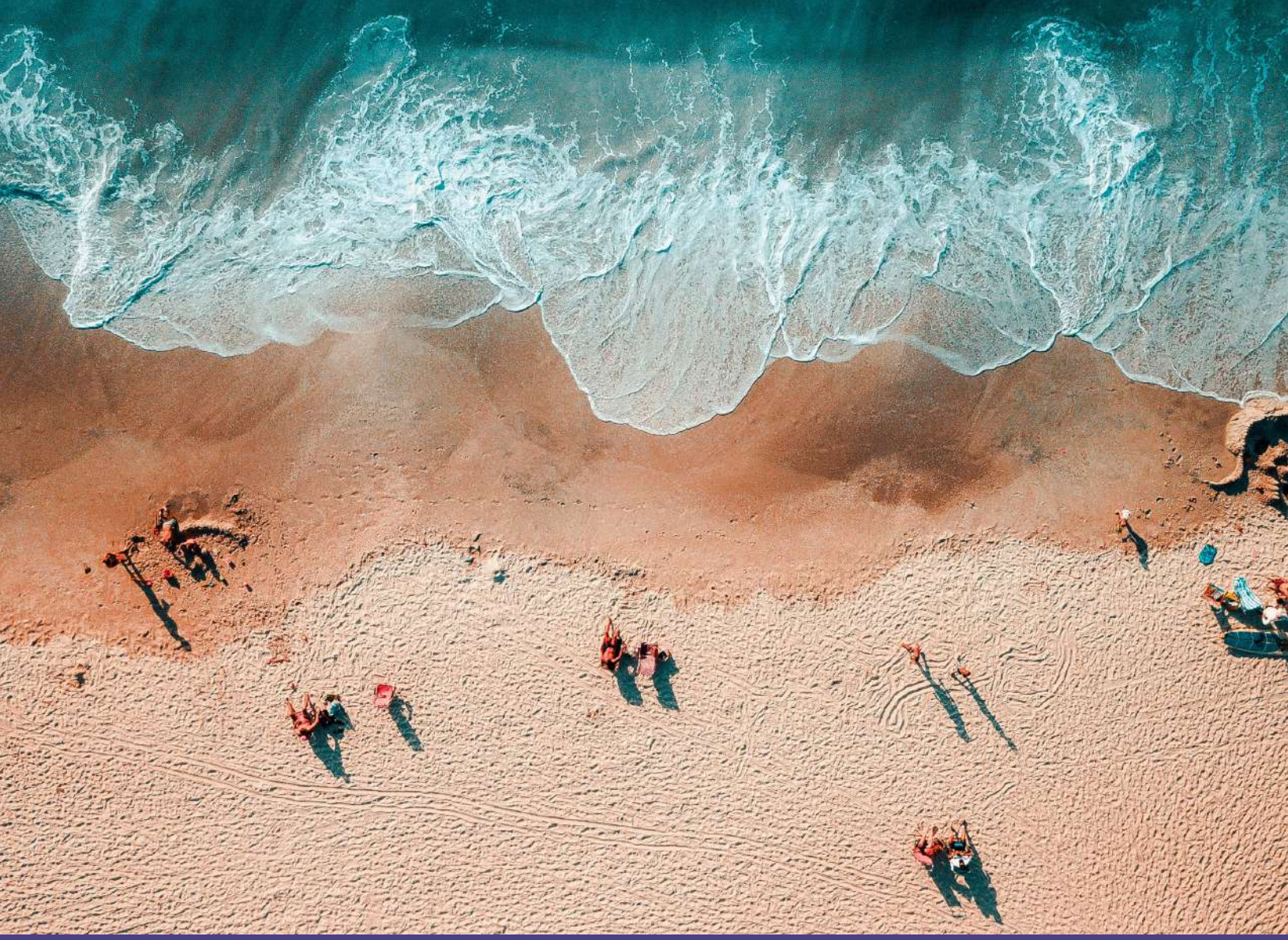

Do I Have Skin Cancer?

A Guide to Skin Cancer Causes, Symptoms, and Prevention

FREE CHECKLIST INCLUDED

SERO

Care in action.™

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States. According to the Skin Cancer Foundation

- 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer by the age of 70
- 2+ American die of skin cancer every hour.
- Having 5 or more sunburns doubles your risk for melanoma
- When detected early, the 5-year survival rate for melanoma is 99 percent.

> While skin cancer can be serious or deadly, it can often be prevented and treated when detected early.

These statistics tell us that **while skin cancer can be serious or even deadly, it can often be prevented. It's also treatable, especially when detected and diagnosed early.**

That's why it's essential to talk to your doctor if you're worried about skin cancer, or if you notice anything on your skin that concerns you. Getting checked out earlier improves your chances of a better outcome if you do have skin cancer.

Evidence also suggests that **raising awareness about skin cancer—including its causes, risk factors, and warning signs—may help save lives.**

That's what this eBook aims to do. You'll find information about skin cancer, it's causes, symptoms, and prevention tips.

About SERO

Care in action.™

SERO is home to more than 30 board-certified physicians practicing radiation oncology out of 20 hospitals and cancer treatment centers around the Charlotte Metro area.

At SERO, we are dedicated to the focused care of all cancer patients and their families during one of the most tumultuous times in their lives.

Every patient has access to both the comprehensive resources of our partners and the expert specialization of our team. Learn more at **treatcancer.com**.

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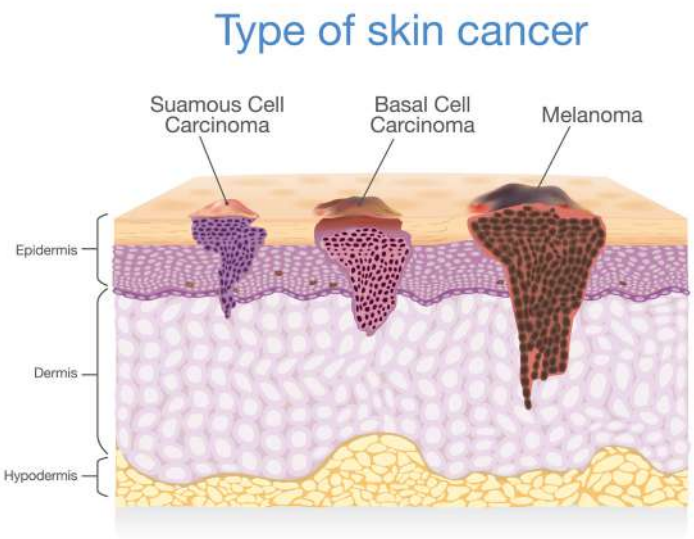
What is Skin Cancer?

Cancer is a broad group of diseases that develop when DNA damage causes cells to abnormally mutate. These abnormal cells then multiply and spread, leading to the development of cancerous tumors and growths.

Skin cancer typically develops when ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun triggers DNA damage in skin cells.



The main types of skin cancer include:

Basal cell carcinoma (BCC)

Named for the cells in the bottom layer of the epidermis, basal cell carcinoma is the most common type of skin cancer tumor. It is the least dangerous of the three common types. Because they grow very slowly, it is rare for BCC to spread or metastasize.

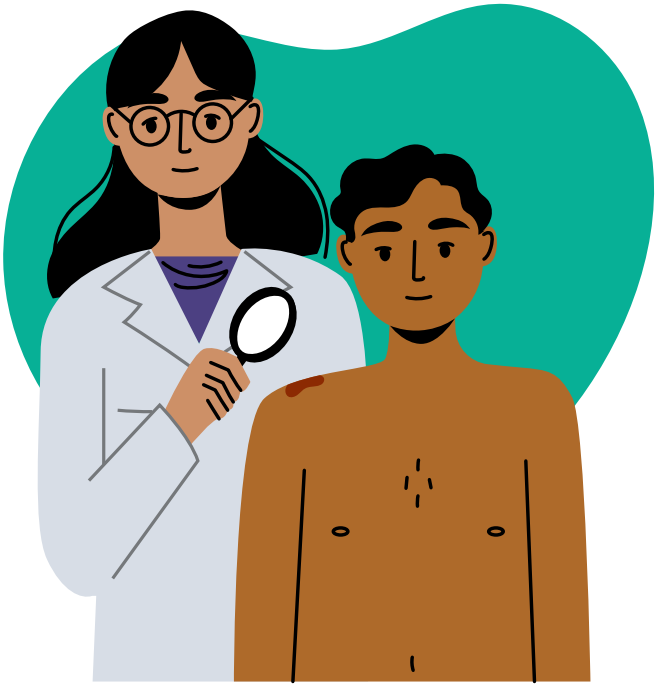
Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC)

Named for the cells that are in the middle layer of your skin, squamous cell carcinoma is less common but more dangerous. If left untreated, squamous cell carcinomas may cause significant disfigurement. Although squamous cell carcinomas may spread to other parts of your body, they are rarely fatal when treated promptly.

Melanoma

Melanoma is named for the melanocyte cells that create the pigment that gives skin its color. This is the rarest of the three main types of skin cancer, but it is the most likely to spread to other parts of your body. Melanoma is the most dangerous type of skin cancer and can be fatal.

Where is Skin Cancer Most Common on the Body?



Any area of your skin can develop cancer.

The most common areas affected are typically the ones that get the most sun exposure, including the

- Scalp
- Head
- Face
- Ears
- Neck
- Chest
- Arms
- Hands
- Legs

But skin cancer can show up in other places, like beneath toenails or around genitals.

Skin Cancer Signs and Symptoms

Skin cancer can look different from person to person. However, there are a few of the skin cancer signs and symptoms to know.

The Appearance of A New Mole or Growth on Your Skin

The growth may look like a bump, scar, smooth shiny patch, dark spot, or rashy area, and it could be burning, itchy, or painful .

A Bleeding, Scaly, Crusty, or Scabby Sore on Your Skin that Doesn't Heal

To identify warning signs, remember the ABCDEs of skin cancer. If any moles or pigmented spots on your body match the ABCDEs below, they could be melanoma.

Skin Cancer ABCDEs

Asymmetry

One of half of the spot doesn't match the other half

Border

The spot has an irregular or poorly defined border

Color

The spot has different colors, including tan, brown, black, or even red, white, or blue

Diameter

Melanomas are usually larger than the size of a pencil eraser, although they can be smaller

Evolving

The spot's size, shape, and/or color changes over time

If you notice any of the above symptoms call your doctor right away.

Common Moles vs Atypical Moles vs Cancerous Moles

Most of us have moles on our bodies. While moles can be perfectly normal, it is important to understand the characteristics of a normal mole as well as atypical moles and cancerous moles.

Common moles are small growths that appear on the skin. Many people are born with moles which frequently develop during childhood and continue to form through middle age.

Characteristics of a common mole include:

- **Size:** 5 millimeters (1/4 inch) in diameter or smaller roughly the size of a pencil eraser
- **Shape:** round or oval
- **Texture:** smooth surface
- **Edges:** a distinct boundary between the edge of the mole and the rest of the skin
- **Protrusion:** slightly raised or dome-shaped
- **Color:** brown, pink, beige, or flesh-colored

Normal mole

Atypical mole

Atypical moles (also called dysplastic nevi) are very similar to melanoma, but it often takes a medical professional to distinguish the difference. While not all atypical moles are cancerous, they can become cancerous. That's why it's important to keep an eye on atypical moles.

Precancerous moles, more commonly referred to as precancerous skin lesions, are growths that have an increased risk of developing into skin cancer.

How to Perform a Skin Cancer Self-Exam

Skin cancers vary in appearance, which is why it's most important to look for new or unusual changes in your skin by performing a skin cancer self-exam each month.

You'll need a few things to perform a thorough self-exam:

- Hand mirror (to examine hard-to-see places)
- Full-length mirror
- Camera or notepad
- A room with plenty of light

STEP 1

Choose A Day of the Month

Pick one day out of the month, mark it on your calendar, and stick to it.

Scan from Head to Toe

Check for atypical moles or other irregularities on your skin, including all nooks and crannies. Check your face, scalp, torso, upper and lower back, hands and arms, and legs and feet.

STEP 2

STEP 3

Keep a Record

Record where your moles, birthmarks, and large freckles are. Note how they look and feel, and whether they show any atypical signs. Note any new growths or changes to existing moles.

Consult Your Doctor

If changes persist, you should schedule an appointment with your doctor.

STEP 4

Your Skin Cancer Prevention Checklist

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Maintaining a few healthy habits can have a long-term impact on the health of your skin!
Here are some simple ways to reduce your skin cancer risk.

Avoid excessive sunlight exposure, especially during the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Keep in mind that no amount of a tan is considered healthy for your skin.

Wear a high-quality and broad-spectrum sunscreen every day and all year. Look for a sunscreen with at least 30 SPF and re-apply it every two hours (or more if you're swimming or sweating). Since UV radiation can penetrate cloud cover, doctors advise wearing sunscreen on overcast days, too.

Wear sun-safe clothing. Sunscreen protects against some but not all types of UV radiation. To boost your skin's protection against the sun, put on a hat and wear clothing that covers your arms and legs.

Wear sunglasses. Sunglasses protect your eyes and the delicate skin surrounding your eyes. Just be sure to get sunglasses that offer protection from the two types of UV radiation, UVA and UVB.

Skip the tanning bed. Tanning beds have been shown to increase exposure to harmful UV radiation and increase the risk of skin cancer.

Perform skin checks regularly. Examine your body, including your head, face, chest, trunk, arms, hands, private areas, legs, and feet for any new or unusual moles or growths. Do this frequently or as advised by your dermatologist.

Review your medications. Some medications can increase your sensitivity to sunlight. Be sure to go over all your medications with your doctor so you'll know if you need to take extra steps for sun-safety.

Boost your overall health. Not smoking, eating a healthy diet, exercising, and drinking enough water are all proven ways to improve the health and appearance of your skin, and keep you healthier overall.

Skin Cancer Risk Factors and Causes

Skin cancer can affect anyone, but certain people have a higher skin cancer risk. This includes people who have one or more of the following risk factors:

- Lighter natural skin tone or color (although people with all skin colors can get skin cancer)
- Skin that easily burns, reddens, freckles, or becomes painful in the sun
- A history of excessive exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation, either from the sun or from an indoor tanning bed, booth, or sunlamp
- A history of sunburns
- Green or blue eyes
- Red or blonde hair
- Certain kinds of moles, or many moles
- A family history of skin cancer
- Older age

Despite these known risk factors, doctors and researchers don't know exactly why skin cancer happens in some people, and the underlying causes of cancer aren't fully understood.

If you have a personal or family history of skin cancer, or if you have known risk factors, your doctor may also advise you to get screened for skin cancer on a routine basis, even if you don’t notice unusual signs or symptoms.

Getting a Skin Cancer Diagnosis

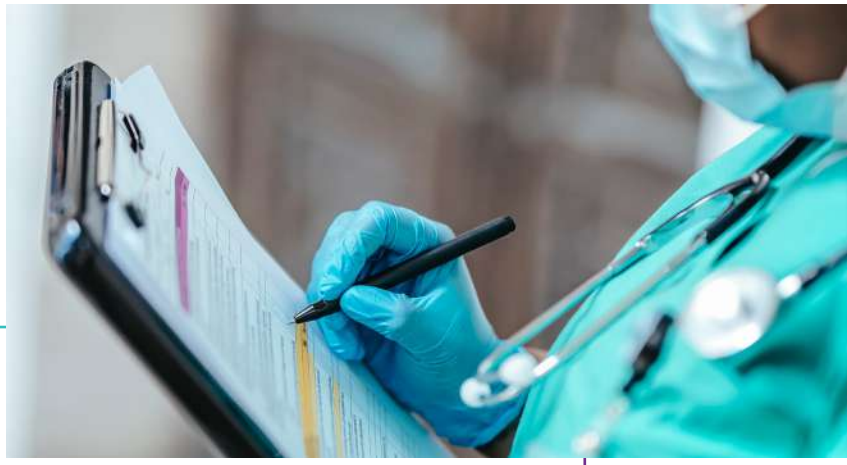
The only way to know for sure whether you have skin cancer is to see your doctor.

Sometimes, other conditions can present with symptoms that look like skin cancer. Other times, skin cancer symptoms are so subtle they're hard to detect on your own.

Your doctor may refer you to a skin specialist, such as a dermatologist or oncologist, who can offer additional tests and diagnostic techniques.

Common tests, screening tools, and diagnostic techniques for skin cancer include a physical exam, a personal health history questionnaire, or a skin biopsy, where some or all of an abnormal-looking area on the skin is removed, then tested by a qualified medical doctor.

Your doctor or medical team may recommend additional tests to identify additional signs of cancer or rule out other conditions.



Stages of Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is often diagnosed in stages that are used to describe how far the cancer has progressed, which can help doctors make recommendations about treatment.

The stages of skin cancer are labeled with the Roman numerals I, II, III, and IV, with **stage I being the earliest stage and stage IV being the most advanced stage.**

In some instances, skin cancer may be diagnosed in stage 0, also known as “carcinoma in situ.” In this stage, abnormal cells in the skin are identified, but they haven't turned into cancer yet.

In stage IV, the cancer has usually spread to other areas of the body.

Skin Cancer Treatment Options

- **Radiation therapy:**
  The use of powerful beams of energy that kill cancer cells and nearby damaged tissue, while preserving nearby healthy tissue.

- **Chemotherapy:**
  The use of medication to kill cancer cells. Chemotherapy medications may be applied topically (on the skin) or administered into the body (via the mouth or injected through a vein)

- **Cryosurgery:**
  The use of liquid nitrogen to freeze and destroy actinic keratosis or small early skin cancers

- **Excisional surgery:**
  Surgical removal of cancer tissue and sometimes a small portion of the surrounding healthy skin

- **Mohs surgery:**
  A surgical procedure used to remove larger, recurring, or tough-to-treat skin cancers using a layer by layer approach to remove the abnormal tissue

- **Photodynamic therapy:**
  The use of a specialized laser light to destroy cancer cells

- **Biological therapy:**
  The use of your body's own immune system to kill cancer cells

These treatments may sound intimidating, but many of them are relatively simple. Some can even be done in a quick office visit with your doctor.

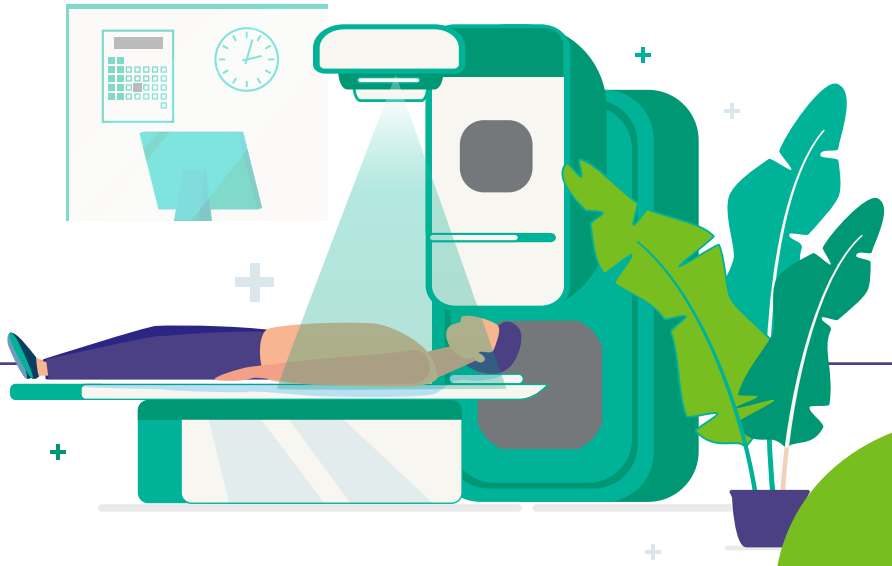
The Benefits of Radiation Therapy for Skin Cancer

Radiation therapy provides a safe, effective treatment for basal and squamous cell carcinoma in many cases.

Radiation therapy may be the best treatment option for skin cancer patients who:

- Have skin cancer in delicate sites on the face, such as those around the nose, eyes, ears, or lips, where surgical defects may harm the area or cause undesirable cosmetic damage
- Have skin cancer that has been treated but has come back in the same location
- Have high-risk squamous cell and basal cell lesions that have close positive margins, nerve invasion, high growth rate, or the possibility of nodal involvement
- Have large skin cancer tumors that cover a large area
- Are over the age of 60
- Have poor overall health or underlying medical conditions that could lead to complications from surgery
- Are on blood thinners or other medications that interfere with surgery

Our experienced team at SERO offers a wide range of advanced and innovative radiation therapy techniques that can help us deliver customized non-invasive surgical skin cancer treatments for our patients.



Skin Cancer Diagnosis & Outlook

Getting a skin cancer diagnosis can be scary. But it may reassure you to know **that the most common types of skin cancer are considered highly treatable and even curable when detected and treated early.**

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, even melanoma, which is considered the most serious type of skin cancer, has a five-year survival rate as high as 99 percent when it is detected and treated before spreading to other parts of the body.

When skin cancer deaths do occur, they are most likely to occur because of melanomas.

Patients with darker skin color are more likely to be diagnosed with skin cancer once its already reached its later stages, when it's more difficult to treat.

This could be for many reasons, including the fact that people with darker skin color are more likely to have skin cancer on atypical areas of the body such as the soles of the feet or inside the mouth. It also may be harder to see skin cancer signs and symptoms in people with darker skin.

> The key element is early diagnosis and treatment

People who are immunosuppressed, people who smoke, and people who have poor overall health may also be more likely to have a poorer prognosis after getting diagnosed with skin cancer.

However, skin cancer is still considered highly treatable, survivable, and curable in the majority of cases. **The key element is early diagnosis and treatment.**

Having a good ongoing relationship with your doctor who can get to know your goals and needs is a helpful step. But there are also things you can do at home to increase your chances of early detection and prevention.

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NEXT STEPS

1. Print your Skin Cancer Prevention Checklist and keep it in a place that's easily accessible.
2. Continue to perform monthly skin checks throughout the year, being especially diligent in the summer months.
3. If you notice anything on your skin that concerns you, set up an appointment with a dermatologist or primary care physician.
4. If you need more information about treating skin cancer with radiation therapy, talk to your doctor about getting a referral to SERO.

www.treatcancer.com
Call (704)-333-7376