

Melanoma isn't the only serious skin cancer

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(HealthDay)—A type of skin cancer called squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) is increasingly common in the United States, so people need to be alert for signs of the disease, an expert says.

About 700,000 new cases of this [skin cancer](#) are diagnosed in the United States each year, according to the American Academy of Dermatology.

"While other skin cancers may be more lethal, they're less common than squamous cell carcinoma," said Dr. M. Laurin Council, an assistant professor of [dermatology](#) at Washington University in St. Louis.

This type of cancer is highly treatable when detected early, "so it's important for people to know the signs of this disease and keep a close eye on their skin," Council added in a news release from the American Academy of Dermatology.

Possible signs of squamous cell carcinoma include a pink or white bump; a rough, scaly patch; or a sore that won't heal, she said.

Unprotected exposure to natural and artificial ultraviolet light is a risk factor for all types of skin cancer. To protect yourself, the American Academy of Dermatology recommends seeking shade, wearing protective clothing and using a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. The academy also advises against tanning beds.

"Prevention and early detection are both vital in the fight against skin cancer," Council said.

The warning signs of melanoma, the deadliest skin cancer, don't usually apply to squamous cell carcinoma, so it's important to keep an eye out for any suspicious spots, Council said.

"Moles are not the only skin lesions that may indicate [skin cancer](#). Any skin growth that is new, changing or won't go away warrants a visit to the dermatologist," she added.

In most cases, [squamous cell carcinoma](#) can be treated with surgery or other methods, Council said. But left untreated, it may grow larger and possibly lead to disfigurement. In rare cases, the cancer may spread, making it more difficult to treat.

More information: The U.S. National Cancer Institute has more on [skin cancer](#).

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