

# Early Presentation of Cancer Symptoms:

# My Job?

National Cancer Action Team  
Part of the National Cancer Programme

## Malignant melanoma and 'Non-melanoma' skin cancers

There are two main types of skin cancer, Malignant melanoma and 'Non-melanoma' skin cancers

- **Malignant melanoma** which is less common but more serious
- Malignant melanoma usually develops from an existing mole but can also develop in normal looking skin
- **'Non-melanoma'** skin cancers which are more common but not as serious
- Non-malignant melanoma develops from other areas of the skin

The early symptoms of malignant melanoma skin cancers include;

- A mole which is getting bigger
- A mole which is changing shape, especially getting an irregular edge
- A mole which is itchy or painful
- A mole which is bleeding or getting crusty
- A mole which is inflamed
- A mole which is changing colour which could include getting darker, patchy or different colours

The early symptoms of 'non-melanoma' skin cancers include;

- A spot or sore that doesn't heal in 4 weeks
- A spot or sore that itches, hurts, scabs, crusts or bleeds for more than 4 weeks
- Patches of skin that damage, break down and/or form an ulcer
- A bump of skin that doesn't heal. The bump is usually a pearly-white colour or 'waxy' looking and may contain blood vessels. Different types can appear as a red or pinky lump.
- A discoloured patch skin that doesn't heal. The patch is usually flat and scaly and can have either a flesh-coloured or brown appearance.

People should always contact their GP if they experience any of the symptoms listed above.

**While they are unlikely to be the result of skin cancer, these types of symptoms always need to be investigated further.**

For more information visit  
NHS Choices at:

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)