



DO YOU KNOW YOUR Skin Cancer Risk?

Knowing the 7 skin cancer risk factors could help protect your life – find out why...

Living in New Zealand comes with glorious sunshine and the great outdoors, but on the downside, it also comes with the highest rate of melanoma in the world¹.

Frighteningly, around **13 New Zealanders** are diagnosed with this life threatening form of skin cancer every day². Read on to learn the seven factors that can put you at risk of developing skin cancer...

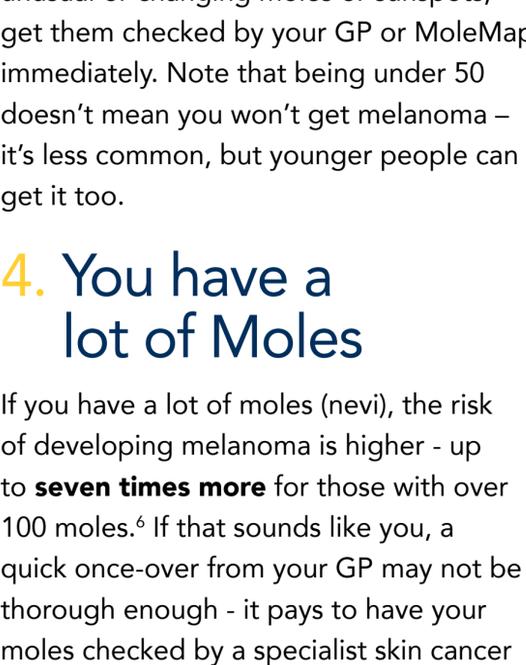


1. You have a family or personal history

If one or more of your immediate relatives has had melanoma, your risk is higher. You're **twice as likely** to develop it if there's a history in your close family (parents, siblings or children)³ and **nine times more likely** to get it again if you've had melanoma once yourself.⁴

2. You have fair or freckly skin

If you have fair, ivory or freckly skin (skin types 1 and 2 on the scale below), you're more susceptible to sunburn and have a higher risk of developing all types of skin cancers, including melanoma. If you do have fair skin, and especially if you've been sunburnt a few times, we recommend having a comprehensive skin check every year.



The Fitzpatrick scale: essentially, the lighter your skin, the higher your skin cancer risk.

3. You're older

Over 50? The bad news is that around 70% of melanoma occurs in people aged 50 years and older². Not only that, most non-melanoma skin cancer (such as basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma) typically appears after age 50 too.

So, if you're 50 or older and notice any unusual or changing moles or sunspots, get them checked by your GP or MoleMap immediately. Note that being under 50 doesn't mean you won't get melanoma – it's less common, but younger people can get it too.

4. You have a lot of Moles

If you have a lot of moles (nevi), the risk of developing melanoma is higher - up to **seven times more** for those with over 100 moles.⁶ If that sounds like you, a quick once-over from your GP may not be thorough enough - it pays to have your moles checked by a specialist skin cancer detection service such as MoleMap, every year.

5. You have Unusual Moles

Unusual or atypical moles are often larger and may have an odd shape or colour – sometimes called 'the ugly duckling' as they look quite different to your other moles. If you have more than five unusual moles, your melanoma risk is **six times higher**.⁷ Google the 'ABCDE' and 'EFG' guides to detecting melanoma so you know the signs to look for.



6. You've been sunburnt

Getting sunburnt at any age increases the risk of all skin cancers in later life, including melanoma². Sunburn is sun damage, so if you're out in the sun, be SunSmart - and above all, try to avoid getting sunburnt. This is especially important for children, as research shows that sun exposure in childhood leads to a greater risk of melanoma in later life.⁸

7. You have an outdoor lifestyle

If your skin is exposed to the sun regularly through work or play, this can increase your risk of most skin cancers. However, in the case of melanoma, recent studies show that there's a greater risk from occasional high doses of sun exposure, such as during holidays or weekends⁹. Either way, whenever you're outdoors, protect your skin from the sun and stay in the shade whenever possible.



Worried that you have a high skin cancer risk?

If one or more of the above risk factors apply to you, talk to your GP or MoleMap Melanographer about the best ways to protect your skin. And, if you haven't already, take this quick skin cancer risk [quiz](#). Developed by dermatologists, it's the quick, easy way to check your risk levels – and also advises you on your next steps, such as reducing your sun exposure or having regular skin checks.

MoleMap are offering an introductory offer of \$30 off any MoleMap service* when you book through Mediwell. Simply book online here and add the promo code 'MED21'.

* [Terms and conditions apply.](#)

Read the full skin cancer risk article [here](#).

References:

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