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PDF generated on July 22, 2016 from

<http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/skin-cancer-non-melanoma/symptoms-and-signs>

[Skin Cancer \(Non-Melanoma\) - Symptoms and Signs \[1\]](#)

This section has been reviewed and approved by the [Cancer.Net Editorial Board \[2\]](#), 06/2015

ON THIS PAGE: You will find out more about body changes and other things that can signal a problem that may need medical care. To see other pages, use the menu on the side of your screen.

People with a basal cell or squamous cell carcinoma may experience the following symptoms. Sometimes, people with non-melanoma skin cancer do not show any of these symptoms or signs. Or, these symptoms may be caused by a medical condition that is not cancer. The skin features that people with basal cell or squamous cell carcinoma frequently develop are listed below.

Changes in the skin are the main warning sign for skin cancer. Each type of skin cancer can appear differently, so it is important to talk with your doctor when you notice a change in your skin.

For basal cell carcinoma, two or more of the following features may be present:

- An open sore that bleeds, oozes, or crusts and remains open for several weeks
- A reddish, raised patch or irritated area that may crust or itch, but rarely hurts
- A shiny pink, red, pearly white, or translucent bump

- A pink growth with an elevated border and crusted central indentation
- A scar-like, white, yellow, or waxy area, often with a poorly defined border

See pictures of these [features of basal cell carcinoma](#) [3]. (Please note this will take you to a separate website.)

Squamous cell carcinoma can often crust, bleed, and appear as:

- A wart-like growth
- A persistent, scaly red patch with irregular borders that may bleed easily
- An open sore that persists for weeks
- An elevated growth with a rough surface and a central depression

See pictures of these [signs of squamous cell carcinoma](#) [4]. (Please note this will take you to a separate website.)

Some types of skin cancer spread along the nerves and can cause itching, pain, numbness, tingling, or a feeling like there is ants crawling under the skin. Other signs may include lumps or bumps under the skin in areas such as the neck, armpit, or groin.

If you are concerned about one or more of these symptoms or signs, please talk with your doctor. Your doctor will ask how long and how often you've been experiencing the symptom(s), in addition to other questions. This may include when you first noticed the skin feature, how long it has been there, and any other symptoms you may be experiencing. This is to help find out the cause of the problem, called a [diagnosis](#) [5].

If skin cancer is diagnosed, relieving symptoms is an important part of cancer care and treatment. This may also be called symptom management, palliative care, or supportive care. Be sure to talk with your health care team about symptoms you experience, including any new symptoms or a change in symptoms.

The [next section in this guide is Diagnosis](#) [5], and it explains what tests may be needed to learn more about the cause of the symptoms. Or, use the menu on the side of your screen to choose another section to continue reading this guide.

Links

[1] <http://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/skin-cancer-non-melanoma/symptoms-and-signs>

[2] <http://www.cancer.net/about-us>

[3] <http://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-information/basal-cell-carcinoma/the-five-warning-signs-images>

[4] <http://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-information/squamous-cell-carcinoma/scc-warning-signs-and-images>

[5] <http://www.cancer.net/node/19623>