

What's The Point Of A Melanoma Biopsy.

Of the three types of skin cancer, melanoma is the most serious. It is more common for melanoma to spread to other parts of the body. When this occurs it gets hard to treat the body and rid it of the cancer. This is why prevention and early detection are key to surviving melanoma. A way to establish the full extent of a suspicious looking mole or mark on the skin is to have a melanoma biopsy. This is often done after a first consultation with a skin cancer professional and confirms the initial diagnosis. It can also provide information on the spread of the cancer and possible treatment.

The most common forms of melanoma biopsy are excisional and incisional. An excisional will remove all the cancerous cells. An incisional biopsy will take a deep sample of the cells, leaving the rest of the cells on the skin.

Excisional biopsies are preferred as they remove all the potential cancerous growth. They will generally take a part of the skin surrounding the mark too. Incisional biopsies are normally performed when the growth is quite large and it would be impractical to take such a large part of the skin away. Or, the suspected cancer was in a delicate or visible location, like the face, and might leave an unsightly scar or wound.

Both of these procedures can be performed in a doctors clinic or skin cancer center. They only take a few minutes and the person is fully aware when the procedure occurs. Generally, the affected area will have a local anesthetic applied to it.

The removed cells are sent to a pathologist who will examine them more closely. The pathologist will determine if the cells are malignant. The depth of the growth will also be established and this will give the doctor a better idea of how far the cancer has progressed and possible treatments.

A biopsy is the best way to determine whether an unusual mark on the skin is actually cancerous. It is only performed after a first examination of the mark by a skin specialist who suspects that it could be cancerous. The information returned from the biopsy can be used to formulate a treatment plan for the disease and an indication of the extent that it has progressed.

Once again, early detection is key to surviving melanoma. If a melanoma has not spread it is easy to treat by simply removing the cancerous cells.

About the Author

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