

## Know When It's Not a Beauty Mark

Most adults have between 10 and 40 moles dotting their bodies. But determining the difference between an innocent, even Cindy Crawford-beautiful spot and a cancerous one isn't easy. *Prevention* advisor Mary Lupo, MD, a dermatologist in New Orleans, suggests scanning skin monthly and seeing a dermatologist if any markings have changed rapidly in the past year or fit these descriptions.



Pink, flaky; usually on the face, hands, or arms; grows back rapidly

**ACTINIC KERATOSIS** In 20% of cases, these "precancers" lead to squamous cell carcinoma. Patients may mistake the scaly patches for eczema, says derm Ellen Marmur, MD.



Pink, shiny; typically on the head, neck, or ears

**BASAL CELL CARCINOMA** The most common skin cancer rarely metastasizes, but growths on ears or lips risk spreading to the lymph nodes and then the lungs.



Red, flaky, raised; often on the head, neck, ears, lips, hands, or arms

**SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA** The lesions tend to look like sores that won't heal. Those on lips and ears have a higher risk of metastasis, and in very rare cases, the cancer can be fatal.



Asymmetrical, with uneven borders and color; forms anywhere on the body

**MELANOMA** This is the deadliest form of skin cancer. The growths are usually the size of a pencil eraser or larger. The uneven coloring can include deep blue or red, dark brown, and black.

### A Scanner That Sizes Up Moles

Approved by the FDA in 2011, MelaFind ([melafind.com](http://melafind.com)) is an in-office handheld scanner that analyzes irregular moles.

In a clinical trial, it correctly identified 98% of melanomas, compared with 78% by dermatologists. "It's a second opinion that makes a diagnosis more accurate," says Ronald Moy, MD, a dermatologist in Los Angeles.

### iSpy Skin Cancer?

In a University of Pittsburgh review of skin cancer smartphone apps, a program that had a dermatologist analyze photos was the most accurate, correctly assessing 98% of moles. The worst app was wrong in an alarming 93% of cases. The conclusion: Apps can be used to track changes in growths, but they can't take the place of an MD.