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ABCDE's SKIN CHECK

ABCDE is an acronym commonly used in dermatology to help individuals and healthcare providers recognize the warning signs of melanoma, a type of skin cancer. Each letter represents a characteristic or feature of a mole or skin lesion that may indicate a higher risk of melanoma.

A: Asymmetry

Normal moles are usually symmetrical, meaning if you were to draw a line through the middle, both halves would look similar. In melanomas, the two halves often look different from each other.

B: Border Irregularity

The borders of normal moles are typically smooth and well-defined. In melanomas, the borders may be irregular, jagged, or poorly defined.

C: Color Variation

Normal moles are usually a single shade of brown, tan, or black. Melanomas may have different shades of brown, black, red, blue, or white within the same mole.

D: Diameter

Normal moles are typically smaller in diameter, usually less than 6 millimeters (about the size of a pencil eraser). Melanomas are often larger, although they can be smaller.

E: Evolution or Change

Normal moles typically remain stable in size, shape, color, and texture over time. Melanomas may change or evolve in appearance, such as growing larger, changing color, becoming raised, or developing new symptoms like itching or bleeding.

These ABCDE criteria serve as a useful guide for identifying suspicious moles or skin lesions that may require further evaluation by a dermatologist. It's important to note that not all melanomas exhibit all of these characteristics, and some melanomas may not fit these criteria. Additionally, other types of skin cancer or benign skin conditions may share some of these features. Therefore, if you notice any changes in your moles or skin lesions, or if you have any concerns about your skin, it's essential to seek medical evaluation by a dermatologist for proper diagnosis and management. Early detection and treatment of melanoma can significantly improve outcomes and survival rates.