FULL SKIN CHECK

PATIENT INFORMATION | TE PUKE MEDICAL CENTRE

New Zealand has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. A full skin check helps identify suspicious spots and gives you a chance to discuss your skin cancer risk and any changes you have noticed.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING A SKIN CHECK?

Your 30-minute appointment may include:

- A discussion of your medical history, previous skin cancers, family history and sun exposure.
- Examination of your skin for unusual or changing moles, spots and lesions.
- Dermoscopy – a special magnifying instrument used to examine individual spots more closely.
- A plan for concerning lesions, which may include photography, monitoring, biopsy or removal.

BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

- If possible, take clear photographs of any lesions you are concerned about, particularly if they change or are not always easy to see.
- Wear clothing that is easy to remove.
- Avoid makeup or nail polish if possible.
- Think about any spots you particularly want checked.
- Tell your doctor about previous skin cancers and relevant family history.

DO I NEED TO UNDRESS?

A thorough check may involve examining most areas of your skin, including areas usually covered by clothing. You will be given privacy to undress to your comfort level. You can request a chaperone and decline examination of any area.

REDUCING YOUR RISK

- Seek shade when UV levels are high.
- Wear protective clothing, a broad-brimmed hat and sunglasses.
- Use broad-spectrum SPF 50+ sunscreen on exposed skin and reapply as directed.
- Avoid sunbeds and intentional tanning.

AREAS NOT ROUTINELY EXAMINED

The genital area is not routinely examined as skin cancers are uncommon in these areas. If you notice any new, changing or concerning lesions in the genital area yourself, please mention them to your doctor so they can be assessed appropriately.

CHECK YOUR SKIN REGULARLY

We recommend checking your own skin every 3 months. Become familiar with your usual moles and spots, and look for anything new or changing. Ask someone to help check areas that are difficult to see, such as your back and scalp.

WHEN SHOULD I GET A SPOT CHECKED?

Arrange an appointment if you notice:

- A new spot that looks different from your other spots.
- A mole changing in size, shape or colour.
- A spot that grows, bleeds, crusts or does not heal.
- Any new or changing lesion that concerns you.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I HAVE A PROFESSIONAL CHECK?

We recommend an annual full skin check with Te Puke Medical Centre. You may need more frequent review depending on your personal history and risk factors. Do not wait for your next annual check if you notice a concerning change.

FULL-BODY PHOTOGRAPHY

If you have a large number of moles, we may recommend full-body photography to document your skin and help identify changes over time. This service is not currently offered at Te Puke Medical Centre, but we can advise you where to access it.

CHECK YOUR SKIN EVERY 3 MONTHS • BOOK A FULL SKIN CHECK WITH US EVERY YEAR

If something changes or concerns you, get it checked sooner.