



Basal Cell Carcinoma

Introduction

- **Basal cell carcinoma** is the most common and least dangerous type of skin cancer.
- About 75% of skin cancers in Australia are basal cell carcinomata.
- These sort of skin cancers rarely spread to other parts of the body.

Appearance

- Basal cell carcinomata occur most often on skin that has been exposed to the sun, for example, the head, neck or upper body, although they may appear on other parts of the body.
- They usually start as small, round or flattened lumps that are red, pale or pearly in colour, and may have blood vessels on the surface.
- A basal cell carcinoma may also appear as a small area of scaly skin, similar to eczema or a sore that won't heal. The lesion may also be pigmented or ulcerated.

Treatment

- Basal cell carcinomata are easily treated when detected early.
- Treatment options include surgery, freezing or topical treatments depending on the type of BCC, although surgery is the only means of obtaining a specimen for histological analysis to both confirm the diagnosis and the completeness of excision.
- If they are not treated, they may form an ulcer and as this deepens may cause damage to tissue and organs nearby – for instance, the eyelids or nose. It may also mean that subsequent surgery is more complex requiring a larger excision, skin flaps or skin grafts.
- If you have one basal cell carcinoma, you may have others, either at the same time or in later years. Basal cell carcinomata are most common in people over 40 years, but occasionally occur in younger adults.