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## **SKIN CHECK INFORMATION SHEET**

How 30 mins of your time could save your life.....effective skin cancer protection is the result of careful mapping and monitoring of the changes in your skin over time. The best time to start is NOW, early detection is your best defence.

### **What is a skin check?**

A skin check is a comprehensive skin history and examination which is done in the rooms at 188 MEDICAL. - The skin check involves taking a skin history relevant to the patient, to assess the extent of risk/exposure to UV radiation and the risk of solar related cancers. - The examination is a head to toe examination, down to the underwear, closely examining the skin surface.

### **Are there any tools used for the skin check?**

The skin examination, relies on good lighting, at times a handheld LED magnifying glass may be used to magnify skin lesions. - A Dermatoscope is used to examine specific skin lesions- this is a particular type of magnifying device is designed to allow the experienced examiner to further assess skin lesions and determine whether they are suspicious or not.

### **Who should be having a skin check?**

Anyone may have a skin check if they are concerned about their skin or particular skin lesions. We encourage all Australians over the age of 40 to have a skin check, at least annually. Australians have one of the highest rates of skin cancers in the world. - Australians who have above average risks should be having skin checks before the age of 40 and potentially more frequently than yearly

## **Are some people at a higher risk than others?**

People at higher risk of skin cancer are those who:

- previously had a skin cancer and/or have a family history of skin cancer
- have a large number of moles on their skin
- have a skin type that is sensitive to ultraviolet (UV) radiation and burns easily - have a history of severe/blistering sunburns
- spend lots of time outdoors, unprotected, during their lifetime
- actively tan or use solariums or sunlamps
- work outdoors

## **What happens if the doctor finds a lesion of concern?**

This will depend on what the doctor has found. If the doctor is concerned about a particular skin lesion, they may suggest a biopsy, to clarify the diagnosis.

A biopsy is a surgical procedure during which the doctor will take an appropriate amount of tissue from the lesion of concern and send the sample to a pathologist to diagnose the lesion.

The results of the pathology report will guide the doctor's treatment. Occasionally the doctor may elect to treat a lesion if they are confident of the diagnosis. This may include freezing/cauterising a lesion, cutting it out or offering topical treatments such as creams.

## **Do I need to wear anything special for a skin check?**

- We ask that you wear comfortable clothing
- The doctor will ask to examine you down to your underwear.
- A sheet or towel will be provided for you to preserve your comfort and dignity.
- We ask that you avoid any makeup or nail polish, as the skin examination involves the face and skin under the nails.

## **Can I do anything apart from getting my skin check?**

- Of course. Good sun care is imperative to minimise risk of skin cancer.
- This involves avoiding unnecessary exposure to the sun,
- Wearing sun screen regularly and to all sun exposed areas, hats sunglasses.
- Self-examination of skin at home is also encouraged.
  - This should be done ideally every 1-3 monthly.