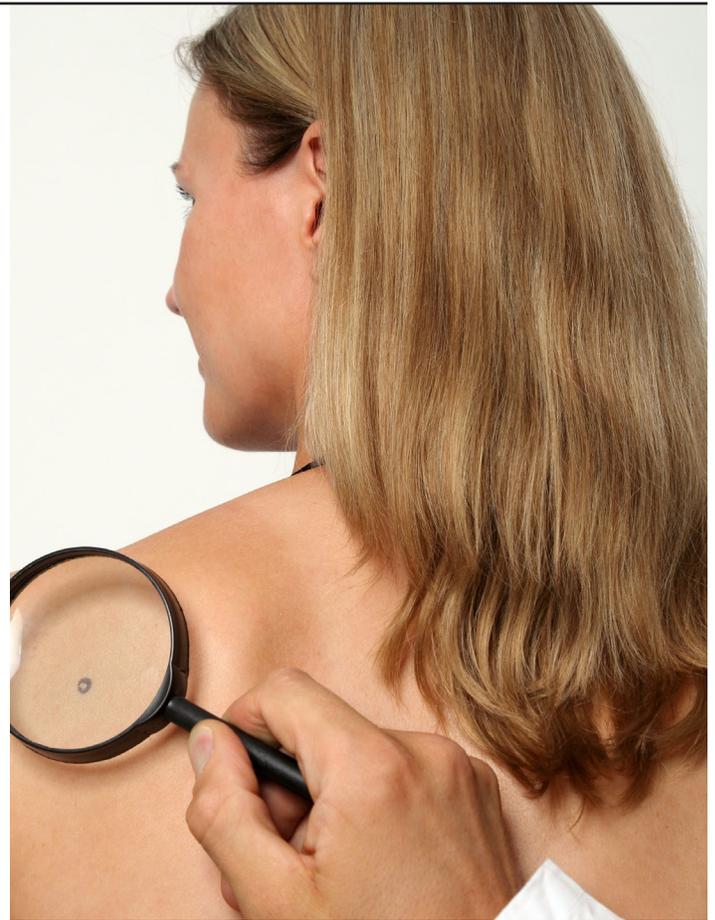


WHAT IS A MOLE?



Dr. Hendricks: A mole is an abnormal growth. It's somewhere between a cancer and just a benign or normal skin or normal tissue. It's a growth is limited to some degree. It doesn't change on a yearly or monthly basis. They may appear later in life. The average number of moles that people have at age 40 is about 40-50 on their body. They decrease as we get older; in number. Usually, children aren't born with moles. If they are, it is a unique kind of mole that needs a different topic. But the moles we are referring to are the ones that are the large or small raised bumps. They may have different colors to them, different shades of brown. They may have hair growing from them. They could be flatter and a little bit scaly. The kinds of moles we're talking about are the ones that are not changing, haven't changed, or just occurred. They don't have any bleeding, don't have any irregular edges and don't have greens or blues or yellows in them. Any of those things are signs of cancer, and they have to go a different direction. But we're talking about sort of the garden variety, pigmented spots that you have on your face, body or anywhere.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS THAT YOU MAY NEED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR MOLE?

Dr. Hendricks: The big worry is malignant melanoma. It's one of the three types of skin cancers. Melano-

ma is a pigmented skin lesion that really can metastasize very early, and it's increasing in incidents throughout our country. It is believed to be sun-related. If it's bigger than a pencil eraser, then it needs to be looked at. If it has irregular borders, it needs to be examined. If it has different colors to it, specifically, yellows, greens or reds, almost like a spilled paint appearance, then it needs some attention. Bleeding, itching are also signs that we need to be alarmed about. Sometimes, we'll even be very suspicious if a patient just feels that they want to have it off. There may be some sort of intuition that this is not a good thing. So that lesion is biopsied and never lasered as opposed to the moles that are not changing or haven't been changing for years. And that's really the first question that I ask when we're in a discussion and consultation about removing these moles.

DOUGLAS HENDRICKS, MD FACS

949-640-9570

www.drhendricks.com