

# Skin cancer health information guide

Information for Consumers



## Why is good health information important?

Good health information can help you make informed decisions. Relying on incorrect information can put you at risk and be harmful to your health. Not all medical information available online is evidence-based – and it can be hard to tell the difference between fact and fiction.

# Six tips for finding good health information online

There are things you can do to find good health information online and judge whether it is right for you.

## Look for information that is relevant to you

#1

Before you start looking, be as clear as you can about what questions you need answers to. This will help you find information that is relevant to you. Knowing what information you need can help you decide where to look.

Think about which organisations are expert in the area you need to know about and if the information is relevant to where you live.

*Does it answer your questions?*

*Is it Australian?*

*Does it connect you to local services?*

## Look for information you can understand

#2

Good health information is clear and easy to understand. It will explain difficult concepts or technical information in a way that makes sense to you. It may also suggest where you can find additional information or support.

*Does it use simple words?*

*Does it explain difficult ideas clearly?*

## Look for trusted sources

#3

Sources you can trust include the websites of hospitals, condition-specific peak medical bodies/colleges, state and territory health services, universities, and Australian Government agencies such as the Department of Health.

These organisations want you to have the best available Australian advice and have processes for checking information is correct.

Trusted sources will clearly show the author's qualifications or who the publisher is.

*Is it written by an expert, or expert organisation?*

*Is there evidence for the information?*

*Is the information current, and up to date?*

*Check the 'about us' page which will tell you who runs the website.*

## Look out for warning signs

#4

Good health information should support you to make informed choices about your health and care. Information that promotes a particular product or service, asks you to give personal details, or creates a sense of fear or panic may be false (misinformation) or even created with an intent to mislead you (disinformation).

You should not rely on information that only gives you one option, or advice based on one person's experience.

*Does it try to sell you something?*

*Does it create a sense of fear or panic?*

*Does it only give you one choice or option?*

*Does it rely on just one case or experience?*

## Is your privacy protected?

#5

Health information should be confidential. Beware of websites that ask for private information or share your details with others without your permission. Most reputable sites publish their privacy policy on the site.

## Check the information with your healthcare provider

#6

Talking about health information with your doctor, asking questions and exploring which options are right for you is important. You have a right to share decisions about your care with your healthcare team and to have the information you need to make informed choice.

# Where to find good health information online

Here are some examples of Australian organisations that provide reliable melanoma and skin cancer information online.

---

## Melanoma Patients Australia



Melanoma Patients Australia (MPA) is a not-for-profit, patient-driven organisation that provides support and information about melanoma prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. They also provide support and advocacy for melanoma patients, carers and their families.

[melanomapatients.org.au](http://melanomapatients.org.au)

**National Melanoma Support Line: 1300 88 44 50**

---

## Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials (MASC) Limited



Melanoma and Skin Cancer Trials (MASC Trials) is Australia and New Zealand's not-for-profit collaborative clinical trials group specialising in melanoma and skin cancer research. Working with leading researchers and institutions locally and around the globe, MASC Trials develops, conducts, and publishes research and clinical trials that improve how we diagnose and treat melanoma and skin cancer.

[masc.org.au](http://masc.org.au)

---

## Melanoma Institute Australia



Melanoma Institute Australia (MIA), a not for profit entity, is the world's leading centre for melanoma research, clinical care and education. MIA's mission of zero deaths from melanoma, is led by its Co-Medical Directors, Professors Georgina Long AO and Richard Scolyer AO, Australia's top melanoma experts. MIA provides clinical care to over 2,000 new patients annually, including clinical trials and patient support and information across all stages of the disease. MIA also provides support to MPA to assist it with its national support to melanoma patients, carers and their families.

[melanoma.org.au](http://melanoma.org.au)

Melanoma Institute Australia has a suite of on-line melanoma risk tools, to guide discussion between clinicians and their patients, including the risk of developing primary melanoma, a subsequent melanoma and a patient's response to immunotherapies.

[melanomarisk.org.au](http://melanomarisk.org.au)



## Cancer Council

Cancer Councils throughout Australia have a wealth of information about melanoma and sun safety, as well as providing access to a number of online and telephone support options for people diagnosed with cancer.

[cancer.org.au](http://cancer.org.au)

**Cancer Council Helpline: 13 11 20**



## SunSmart program

Cancer Council also runs the SunSmart program which provides many resources on skin cancer prevention and sun protection.

[sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au)



## Melanoma and Skin Cancer Advocacy Network (MSCAN)

MSCAN provides an innovative approach to tackle Australia's national cancer. MSCAN's mission is to listen to, represent and inform the melanoma / skin cancer community with a focus on three key areas: research, advocacy and information.

[mscan.org.au](http://mscan.org.au)



## The Australasian College of Dermatologists

The Australasian College of Dermatologists (ACD) is the peak medical college accredited by the Australian Medical Council for the training and professional development of medical practitioners in the specialty of dermatology. ACD provides authoritative information about dermatology to Government, the media, other health professionals and consumers.

[dermcoll.edu.au](http://dermcoll.edu.au)

Enter your location to locate a Dermatologist near you

[dermcoll.edu.au/find-a-derm](http://dermcoll.edu.au/find-a-derm)



## Skin Cancer College Australasia

Skin Cancer College Australasia (SCCA) are the not-for-profit peak body for primary care skin cancer practitioners in Australia and New Zealand. SCCA are passionate about fostering and supporting the development of health care professionals to combat skin cancer and save lives. They achieve this through education, research, advocacy, and standards. You can also find your nearest Accredited Skin Cancer Doctor from the directory of over 600 proven practitioners.

[skincancercollege.org](http://skincancercollege.org)



## Healthdirect

Provides free health advice for Australians including information about different health topics and medicines. The website has information on patient symptoms and allows you to search for a health service that meet your needs.

[healthdirect.gov.au](http://healthdirect.gov.au)

Healthdirect Hotline 1800 022 222

---

## Cancer Australia

Cancer Australia aims to reduce the impact of cancer and supports fair outcomes for people affected by cancer. The website has information about cancer management, treatment, and research.

[canceraustralia.gov.au](http://canceraustralia.gov.au)

---

## Consumers Health Forum of Australia

The national peak body representing the interests of Australian healthcare consumers. The website has a list of consumer and community health organisations that offer information and support.

[chf.org.au](http://chf.org.au)



Australian Government

Cancer Australia



## For more information:

[melanomapatients.org.au](http://melanomapatients.org.au)

[facebook.com/MelanomaPatientsAustralia](https://facebook.com/MelanomaPatientsAustralia)

[instagram.com/melanomapatientsaust](https://instagram.com/melanomapatientsaust)

[twitter.com/melanomasupport](https://twitter.com/melanomasupport)