

Partridge Street General Practice

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.

Partridge Street General Practice in conjunction with Dr Nick Mouktaroudis have put together this Frequently Asked Questions information sheet for Skin Checks.

What is a skin check?

- A skin check is a comprehensive skin history and examination which is done in the rooms at Partridge Street General Practice.
- 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 handheld magnifying device 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

Does the doctor take photos of my skin?

The approach to skin checks may vary from doctor to doctor. At Partridge street during a skin check, the doctor will take photos of specific skin lesions, if they are concerned or want to make note of a particular skin lesion.

Photographs are useful as an adjunct to the description of the lesion but act as a reference to position and can serve as comparisons if required.

The photos will be uploaded into the relevant patients file in the clinical software and can be viewed by all doctors viewing the patient's case notes.

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.

Generally pigmented lesions (coloured spots), will be biopsied in their entirety whereas non pigmented skin lesion may be sampled partially if the lesion is too large to sample in its entirety.

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.

Biopsies will generally be done at a later scheduled time and tend to be booked in with the Practice Nurse also in the procedure room within the practice.

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.
- A chaperone (usually a nurse) is always offered to patients
- We ask that you avoid any makeup or nail polish, as the skin examination involves the face and skin under the nails.

How long does the skin check usually take?

- We normally allow 30 mins for a skin check for an existing patient of the practice, and 45 mins for a New Patient to our Practice.

This will give the doctor adequate time to perform a thorough history and examination.

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.

Do I need to see a GP or should I see a dermatologist?

GPs are primary care physicians and are on the frontline in terms of skin cancer detection. All GPs can do a skin check, though not all GPs have formal training in skin cancer medicine and dermatoscopy.

Dr Nick Mouktaroudis has had formal training in Skin Cancer medicine and Surgery and has several certifications in skin cancer medicine and surgery from the University of Queensland.

Dermatologists are skin specialists, whilst all do skin checks, some have more skin cancer experience than others.

TO BOOK YOUR SKIN CHECK WITH DR NICK MOUKTAROUDIS
Telephone our Practice on 8295 3200
Or with our online booking partner



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