

Patient information factsheet

Digital mole mapping

We have written this factsheet to provide you with information about digital mole mapping. It explains what digital mole mapping is, what it involves and what the potential benefits are. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

What are moles?

Moles are small, coloured spots on the skin. Most people have them and they are usually nothing to worry about unless they change size, shape or colour.

Not all coloured spots on the skin are moles. Coloured spots on the skin can also be:

- seborrhoeic keratosis (common, harmless growths on the skin that appear with age)
- dermatofibromas (common, harmless overgrowths of fibrous tissue in the skin)

What is digital mole mapping?

Digital mole mapping is a safe, non-invasive way of detecting skin cancer. It uses a specialist digital photo documentation system to map the moles on the body. The photographs produced can then be compared to photographs taken at future appointments, so that we can identify changing or new moles over time.

At University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHS), we use a digital mole mapping system called FotoFinder.

What are the benefits of digital mole mapping?

Digital mole mapping helps to:

- highlight any new moles or any changes to existing moles
- detect melanoma (a type of skin cancer) at an early stage when treatment is most effective

Digital mole mapping is particularly helpful for people with a large number of moles, as it can be very difficult to keep track of changing or new moles.

How should I prepare for the appointment?

At your digital mole mapping appointment, your skin will need to be uncovered so that we can take photographs of as many of your moles as possible. To help with this, please wear underwear that leaves as much of your skin uncovered as possible. Please be aware that you will need to wear the same or similar underwear to all future follow-up appointments.

If you have long hair, please bring something to tie or pin it up with.

Do not use fake tan or moisturisers containing fake tan in the two weeks before your appointment, as this can affect the appearance of your moles.

Patient information factsheet

What will happen during the appointment?

We will begin your first appointment by completing a questionnaire with you.

In a private, locked room, a clinician (a specialist healthcare professional) will then ask you to undress down to your underwear and remove any glasses, watches or jewellery. They will then take a series of digital photographs of your entire body using a sophisticated camera system. They may also take some close-up photos of any unusual looking moles. All photographs will then be saved and stored securely.

How long will the appointment take?

Most digital mole mapping appointments will usually take 30 to 60 minutes.

What will happen after the appointment?

It is very important that you continue to monitor and check your own skin between clinic appointments. Please contact us for advice if you notice any changes to your existing moles or any new moles appear.

How often will I need follow-up appointments?

We will usually book you in for a follow-up appointment every 6 to 12 months. At these follow-up appointments, we will compare your moles with the photographs from your first appointment, to check for any changes.

The number of follow-up appointments you will need will depend on your individual circumstances. Some people may only need a few follow-up appointments, while others may need regular appointments for the rest of their lives.

What will happen to my photographs?

Your photographs will be securely stored, unless you ask us to delete them. This system is password protected and can only be accessed by UHS dermatology doctors and nurses. Your photographs will only be examined by members of the healthcare team involved in your care.

At your follow-up appointments, we will use your previously stored photographs as a baseline to detect if you have any new or changing moles.

In the future, we may be able to give you electronic copies of your photographs if you bring a new and unused memory stick with you to your clinic appointment.

We will ask you to sign a consent form which confirms you have read this information and you agree to have digital photographs taken and stored for future use in your individual healthcare.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Dermatology team

Email: DermPPC@uhs.nhs.uk

Patient information factsheet

Useful links

www.nhs.uk/conditions/moles

www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/melanoma/getting-diagnosed/screening

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**