



The Skin Cancer Foundation Journal

We care about you and your family.

40th BIRTHDAY SPECIAL ISSUE

The future looks bright!



2019

40
SKIN
CANCER
FOUNDATION
YEARS OF
SERVICE



surgery around the eyes. I tell all my patients who have surgery near the eye that they'll probably have a black eye afterwards. If they don't, they'll be pleasantly surprised. If the surgery was on the upper eyelid, I warn them that it may temporarily swell shut. Sleeping with the head elevated and using ice packs can help. Thanks to gravity, swelling goes away fairly quickly within a few days.

— Interview by Julie Bain

Désirée Ratner, MD, is clinical professor of dermatology at NYU Langone Health and in private practice in New York City. She is also editor-in-chief of *Carcinomas & Keratoses*, The Skin Cancer Foundation's new digital publication for medical professionals. It focuses on keratinocyte carcinomas, also known as nonmelanoma skin cancers.

2

Thinking About Inking?

Q: Can a tattoo increase the risk for skin cancer?



Ariel Ostad, MD

DERMATOLOGISTS have been seeing patients with tattoos for decades, and they have never found an increased

prevalence of skin cancer in those individuals. The same is true for patients who have already had melanoma or another form of

skin cancer — the inks used in tattoos have not been shown to increase their risk of recurrence. People who have had skin cancer are always at higher risk of developing future skin cancers, but tattoos do not increase that risk.

However, just because your skin has bright or dark ink on it doesn't mean it will protect your skin from the sun. Plus, the sun can fade the colors of your tattoo as well as cause skin damage that can lead to future skin cancers, so use sunscreen regularly, and cover up with clothing.

Also, it's never a good idea to have a tattoo placed too close to (or over) a mole. Changes occurring in a mole — to its symmetry, border, color, size, shape or texture — are potentially key warning signs that it may be evolving into a melanoma or another type of skin cancer. This is especially important for people who have multiple moles or atypical mole syndrome, since they are at increased risk of developing melanoma.

It's important to keep *any* spots on your skin that are new, changing or not healing completely visible, or you could risk delaying detection of skin cancer. It's also not advisable to tattoo over a skin cancer scar. It's important to be able to look at the scar in case the cancer recurs. Tattooing will cover the area and potentially allow a recurrence to be missed.

Anything that delays detection can be extremely dangerous. If you get a tattoo, make sure it is placed on a patch of skin that is in the clear.

— Interview by Ali Venosa

Ariel Ostad, MD, is a dermatologist and Mohs surgeon in private practice in New York City, and assistant clinical professor of dermatology at NYU School of Medicine.