

Homework Activity – The Skin Self-Exam

By checking your skin regularly, you will learn what is normal for you. It may be helpful to record the dates of your skin exams and to write notes about the way your skin looks. If your doctor has taken photos of your skin, you can compare your skin to the photos to help check for changes. If you find anything unusual, see your doctor.

The best time to do this exam is after a shower or bath. You should check your skin in a room with plenty of light. You should use a full-length mirror and a hand-held mirror. It's best to begin by learning where your birthmarks, moles, and other marks are and their usual look and feel.

Check for anything new:

- New mole (that looks different from your other moles)
- New red or darker color flaky patch that may be a little raised
- New flesh-colored firm bump
- Change in the size, shape, color, or feel of a mole
- Sore that does not heal

Check yourself from head to toe:

- Look at your face, neck, ears, and scalp. You may want to use a comb or a blow dryer to move your hair so that you can see better. You also may want to have a relative or friend check through your hair. It may be hard to check your scalp by yourself.
- Look at the front and back of your body in the mirror. Then, raise your arms and look at your left and right sides.
- Bend your elbows. Look carefully at your fingernails, palms, forearms (including the undersides), and upper arms.
- Examine the back, front, and sides of your legs. Also look around your genital area and between your buttocks.
- Sit and closely examine your feet, including your toenails, your soles, and the spaces between your toes.