



# Melanoma: Treatments (leaflet 5 of 7)

Patient information from the British Association of Dermatologists

Produced for National Cancer Patient Information Pathways, National Cancer Action Team

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Melanoma leaflets in this series, produced by the British Association of Dermatologists:

1. Prevention and risk factors
  2. Symptom awareness and early detection
  3. Referral, tests and investigations
  4. Diagnosis and staging
  5. **Treatments**
  6. Follow up care and cancer in remission
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At present, the treatment for melanoma is to remove it by surgery. There is no other treatment, and usually no other tests are needed. Radiotherapy is of little benefit, and various drugs have been tried, but with limited success only.

Most people who have had a melanoma removed will need another operation to try to prevent the melanoma from coming back at the original site. During the operation, some healthy skin will be removed from around the original scar to make absolutely sure that all of the melanoma has been taken away, and this makes the scar larger than before. Occasionally a skin graft will be needed.

“Sentinel node biopsy” may be discussed with some people. In this, a small sample of the nearest lymph node (a type of very small gland) is taken as an additional procedure when the melanoma is being removed. However sentinel node biopsy is only used routinely in a small number of centres, and is often only performed only as part of a research study: it is not an essential part of treatment but can sometimes be used in later stage melanoma.

If your melanoma has spread to the lymph nodes or to other parts of the body, then you may need surgery on these areas.

**For more information, please contact:**

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