

Squamous Cell Carcinoma

Complete discussion guide

A printable set of questions to bring to appointments with your care team. Each section below is also available as its own one-page checklist.

Sections

1. What Are the Early Signs of Squamous Cell Carcinoma and How Is It Different From Other Skin Cancers?
2. How Do Doctors Grade or Stage an SCC and Why Does That Matter for Treatment?
3. What Are the Main Treatment Approaches for SCC, and What Are the Pros and Cons of Each?
4. What Follow-Up Care Is Required After SCC Treatment?
5. What Increases the Risk of SCC Coming Back or Spreading to Lymph Nodes or Other Organs?
6. How Do I Perform Regular Skin Checks for SCC and What Changes Should Alert Me?
7. Are There Special Considerations for SCC in High-Risk Areas (Ears, Lips, Fingers)?
8. What Prevention Steps and Skin-Care Practices Reduce My Chance of Getting Another SCC?

<https://www.beatingskincancer.com/squamous-cell-carcinoma>



What Are the Early Signs of Squamous Cell Carcinoma and How Is It Different From Other Skin Cancers?

Squamous Cell Carcinoma

<https://www.beatingskincancer.com/squamous-cell-carcinoma/early-signs-vs-other-skin-cancers>

Appointment date

Doctor's name

- ☐ Does this spot look more consistent with SCC, BCC, or an actinic keratosis — and how confident are you without a biopsy?

- ☐ Should this be biopsied now, or is it reasonable to monitor it for a defined period first?

- ☐ Is this arising from a scar, chronic wound, or an area of prior radiation, and does that change how it should be evaluated?

- ☐ What specific changes in this spot should prompt me to call you before my next scheduled visit?

- ☐ Given where this is located, are there other spots nearby I should also be watching closely?



How Do Doctors Grade or Stage an SCC and Why Does That Matter for Treatment?

Squamous Cell Carcinoma

<https://www.beatingskincancer.com/squamous-cell-carcinoma/staging-and-grading>

Appointment date

Doctor's name

- ☐ What is the T stage of my tumor, and were any high-risk features found on pathology?

- ☐ What is the differentiation grade, and how does that affect my overall risk category?

- ☐ Am I considered low-risk, high-risk, or very-high-risk — and what specifically puts me in that category?

- ☐ Based on my risk category, what margin width or surgical approach are you recommending, and why?

- ☐ Do I need imaging or a sentinel lymph node biopsy to check my lymph nodes, or is that not indicated for my case?



What Are the Main Treatment Approaches for SCC, and What Are the Pros and Cons of Each?

Squamous Cell Carcinoma

<https://www.beatingskincancer.com/squamous-cell-carcinoma/treatment-options>

Appointment date

Doctor's name

- ☐ Based on my tumor's size, location, and risk features, which treatment do you recommend, and why over the alternatives?

- ☐ What is the expected cure rate for this specific approach with my type of tumor?

- ☐ What will the cosmetic outcome and recovery time realistically look like?

- ☐ Is a Mohs surgeon available for my case, and would that meaningfully change my odds compared to standard excision?

- ☐ If surgery isn't an option for me, what would radiation or systemic therapy involve, and what results should I expect?



What Follow-Up Care Is Required After SCC Treatment?

Squamous Cell Carcinoma

<https://www.beatingskincancer.com/squamous-cell-carcinoma/follow-up-care>

Appointment date

Doctor's name

- ☐ Is my SCC classified as low-risk or high-risk, and what follow-up schedule does that mean for me?

- ☐ Will you be checking my lymph nodes at each visit, and what would a concerning finding feel like?

- ☐ Based on my history, what is my realistic risk of developing another skin cancer?

- ☐ Would chemoprevention, like nicotinamide, make sense for someone with my risk profile?

- ☐ What symptoms at or near the treatment site should prompt me to call before my next scheduled visit?



What Increases the Risk of SCC Coming Back or Spreading to Lymph Nodes or Other Organs?

Squamous Cell Carcinoma

<https://www.beatingskincancer.com/squamous-cell-carcinoma/recurrence-and-metastasis-risk>

Appointment date

Doctor's name

- ☐ Based on my pathology report, is my SCC classified as low-risk, high-risk, or very-high-risk?

- ☐ Which specific feature — size, depth, differentiation, nerve involvement — is driving that risk category?

- ☐ Do I need imaging or a lymph node exam based on my risk level, and if so, what will that involve?

- ☐ Am I more at risk for local recurrence, nodal spread, or both?

- ☐ How does my immunosuppression status (if applicable) change my monitoring schedule going forward?



How Do I Perform Regular Skin Checks for SCC and What Changes Should Alert Me?

Squamous Cell Carcinoma

<https://www.beatingskincancer.com/squamous-cell-carcinoma/self-skin-checks>

Appointment date

Doctor's name

- ☐ Can you show me what specifically to look for so I recognize "changed" for this spot in the future?

- ☐ Given my history and skin type, how often should I be getting a professional full-body skin exam?

- ☐ Are there areas of my body I should be paying extra attention to during self-checks?

- ☐ If I have actinic keratoses, what would tell me one of them is starting to change into something more concerning?

- ☐ Is this spot something I can keep watching, or should it be biopsied now?



Are There Special Considerations for SCC in High-Risk Areas (Ears, Lips, Fingers)?

Squamous Cell Carcinoma

<https://www.beatingskincancer.com/squamous-cell-carcinoma/high-risk-locations>

Appointment date

Doctor's name

- ☐ Does the location of my SCC put it in a higher-risk category, and why?

- ☐ Should I be referred to a Mohs surgeon or a multidisciplinary team given where this tumor is?

- ☐ Is there any imaging needed to check whether it has reached cartilage, bone, or nearby lymph nodes?

- ☐ What will reconstruction involve, and who will be doing that part of the treatment?

- ☐ Given the location, how closely will I need to be followed after treatment?



What Prevention Steps and Skin-Care Practices Reduce My Chance of Getting Another SCC?

Squamous Cell Carcinoma

<https://www.beatingskincancer.com/squamous-cell-carcinoma/prevention>

Appointment date

Doctor's name

- ☐ Given my history, am I a candidate for nicotinamide or a prescription chemoprevention option?

- ☐ Do I have actinic keratoses or field damage that should be treated proactively?

- ☐ How often should I be seen for follow-up skin exams based on my risk?

- ☐ If I'm on immunosuppressive medication, should my dermatologist and my other specialist be coordinating on my skin cancer risk?

- ☐ Are there specific areas of my skin, based on where my prior SCC was, that I should be paying closer attention to?
