

## **SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA (SKIN CANCER)**

Squamous cell carcinoma is a form of superficial skin cancer. It is a form of skin cancer which tends to occur in fair-skinned people who have received significant sun exposure especially when they were younger. This type of skin cancer normally appears as a small red crusted or scabbed spot in the skin which never seems to heal properly. It may bleed at times.

Squamous cell skin cancer is common and in the vast majority of cases always curable. Microscopic examination is necessary to determine whether a growth is cancerous. This is why the biopsy test was done.

Skin cancers are most common on the face, neck and arms since these are the sun-exposed areas. If a person develops one skin cancer there is a slightly greater chance that they will develop another one in the future. This is why it will be necessary to examine your skin periodically to check if any new growths have developed or if any growths have changed.

Squamous cell skin cancers are best treated early when they are small since it is simpler to remove a small growth than a large one. Surgical removal of squamous cell cancers is almost 100 % curative.

Very rarely a skin cancer will grow back. In order to detect this the treated area should be checked periodically. If you become concerned about the treated area or if any other new growths appear, please return to my office promptly.

Many patients are surprised when I tell them that the skin cancers are related to sun exposure since they really don't get any sun exposure at present. This is because the skin cancers arise from the sun when you were very young such as 5, 10 or 20 years old. It is important to minimize any further damage by using sunscreens regularly. I do not recommend you become a hermit and avoid all sun exposure but if you do go outside or are in a sunny area, please use sunscreen regularly.

Although technically this type of growth is a true cancer, it is confined to the skin in the vast majority of cases. Fortunately treatment is almost always curative. If you have any other questions about this type of growth, please do not hesitate to ask before you leave the office.