



# NCCN QUICK GUIDE™

# Melanoma

This NCCN QUICK GUIDE™ sheet summarizes key points from the complete [NCCN Guidelines for Patients®: Melanoma](#). These guidelines explain which tests and treatments are recommended by experts in cancer. To view and download the guidelines, visit [NCCN.org/patients](http://NCCN.org/patients) or, to order printed copies, visit [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

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## What is melanoma?

Melanoma is a cancer that starts in cells called melanocytes. Melanocytes are found in the lower part of the top layer of the skin called the epidermis. Melanoma can spread to (invade) the lower part of the skin, called the dermis, to reach nearby tissues and other parts of the body.	<a href="#">10</a>
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## What tests are used to diagnose (confirm) melanoma?

<b>Medical history</b>	■ Your medical history includes any health events in your life and any medications you've taken.	<a href="#">19</a>
<b>Physical exam</b>	■ A physical exam is a review of your body for signs of disease.	
<b>Tissue tests</b>	■ To confirm if you have melanoma, a sample of tissue must be removed from the concerning spot on your skin to test for cancer cells.	<a href="#">20</a>
	■ After a skin biopsy confirms melanoma, a biopsy of the lymph nodes may be recommended to check if the cancer has spread.	<a href="#">24</a>

## How do doctors rate melanoma growth to plan treatment?

Cancer staging is how doctors assess and rate the extent of the cancer. The cancer stage is based on the growth and spread of the primary tumor. It's used to plan treatment.	<a href="#">29</a>
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## What treatments are used for melanoma?

■ Surgery, a wide excision, is often used as the main (primary) treatment to remove cancer.	<a href="#">36</a>
■ Systemic therapy is the use of drugs, like immunotherapy, to treat cancer throughout the body.	<a href="#">40</a>
■ Radiation therapy is most commonly used for melanoma as palliative treatment to relieve symptoms such as pain caused by the cancer.	<a href="#">46</a>
■ Supportive care is treatment for the symptoms that are caused by cancer or its cancer treatment.	<a href="#">47</a>
■ A clinical trial is a type of research that studies how safe and helpful a treatment is.	<a href="#">48</a>



## What are the main treatment options for local melanoma?

<b>Stage 0 and IA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide excision</li> </ul>	<b>55</b>
<b>Stage IB and II</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide excision</li> <li>Wide excision with SLN (sentinel lymph node) biopsy</li> </ul>	

## What are the main treatment options for regional melanoma?

<b>Stage IIIA, IIIB, and IIIC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active lymph node basin surveillance</li> <li>Complete lymph node dissection</li> </ul>	<b>61</b>
<b>Clinical Stage III</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide excision of primary tumor + complete therapeutic lymph node dissection</li> </ul>	
<b>Stage III clinical satellite or in-transit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systemic therapy</li> <li>Complete surgical excision to clear margins if possible</li> <li>T-VEC (talimogene laherparepvec), BCG (Bacillus Calmette-Guerin), interferon alfa, or IL-2 (interleukin-2) injection in tumor</li> <li>Imiquimod cream</li> <li>Consider radiation therapy if can't be removed by surgery</li> <li>Isolated limb infusion/perfusion with melphalan</li> </ul>	

## What are the options for melanoma that returns near the first tumor?

<b>True local scar recurrence (persistent disease)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove more tissue from the tumor site (for clear margins)</li> <li>Possible lymph node mapping and SLN biopsy</li> </ul>	<b>66</b>
<b>Local, satellite, and/or in-transit recurrence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systemic therapy</li> <li>Complete surgical excision to clear margins if possible</li> <li>T-VEC, BCG, interferon alfa, or IL-2 injection in tumor</li> <li>Local ablation therapy</li> <li>Imiquimod cream</li> <li>Consider radiation therapy if can't be removed by surgery</li> <li>Isolated limb infusion/perfusion with melphalan</li> </ul>	

## What are the treatment options for metastatic melanoma?

<b>Limited stage IV</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surgery, then observation, nivolumab, or treat as widespread</li> <li>Systemic therapy, then observe, nivolumab, surgery, or treat as widespread</li> </ul>	<b>72</b>
<b>Widespread stage IV</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First, surgery and/or radiation for brain metastases</li> <li>Systemic therapy</li> <li>T-VEC injection into tumor</li> <li>Palliative surgery or radiation</li> <li>Best supportive care or palliative care</li> </ul>	

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