



Don't make a Mountain out of a Mole

Skin cancer is not a subject that anyone likes to dwell on for too long. After all, it's one of those things that happen to other people. Nevertheless, it's one of the most common cancers in the UK.

There are a number of factors that can increase the risk of developing skin cancer:

- Sun/sunbed exposure
- Fair skin
- Blonde/red hair
- Blue eyes
- A large number of moles
- Family history of skin cancer
- A history of sunburn (especially as a child)

As a professional rugby player who spends significant amounts of time outside and then potentially jumps aboard a plane to reach sunnier climates at the season's end, you're at greater risk.

Prevention and detection is crucial, the importance of covering up and applying high factor sunscreen being well documented. Also, if you have moles or patches of normal skin that change in size, shape or colour over weeks or months, or itch, are painful or bleed, you should show them to your doctor. Whilst the vast majority of moles remain non-cancerous, some may change over time and have the potential to become cancerous.

What other precautions can you take?

If you want to have your moles checked, as an RPA member you can have them screened at 108 Harley Street at significantly reduced rates.

What is mole screening and what does it involve?



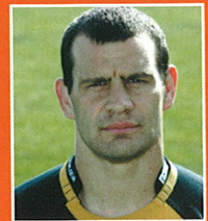
PDM, Richard Bryan in his playing days

Bath and London Irish PDM, **Richard Bryan**, paid Harley Street a visit to find out:

Whilst visiting the world famous Harley Street is undoubtedly fascinating, particularly walking past the practices offering to treat conditions I've never heard of, you cannot escape the fact that mole screening is a serious business. Testing for potential signs of skin cancer will always create a few nerves and certainly did for me; however, having become aware of a few unusual moles I was anxious to have them checked by an expert. "How long has that mole been on my leg?" and "I don't remember that mole being that size and shape" were a few worries which had begun to cross my mind. Just for the record, I like to think I'm not a hypochondriac.

Luckily, the staff at 108 Harley Street are very quick to put you at ease and the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly rather than stuffy and overbearing. Also, it helps that the screening involves a straightforward, non-invasive process which can take as little as 30 minutes.

“ I found the mole screening to be very educational. I am now more aware of the dangers of excessive sun damage and how to spot any warning signs in the future. ”



Former Wasps no 8 Dan Ward-Smith also speaks highly of his trip to 108 Harley Street:

Firstly, I completed an assessment which asked me about various risk factors e.g. family history of skin cancer, history of sunburn, etc. I then had a discussion with an expert to gauge any concerns I might have had about specific moles and any concerns they might have had about my history. From this chat, it became clear pretty quickly that being fair skinned, having fairish hair, blue eyes, having over 50 moles and being able to remember getting blistered arms after a day in the Cornish sunshine as a 6 year old, all added up to someone at a higher than average risk and in need of being checked out.

Every mole and toe-nail (apparently skin cancer can develop under them!) was then examined by the specialist. Those moles that warranted further investigation were photographed for closer inspection and 'blown up' on a monitor to check for any new nodules, inflammation or ragged edges, etc. – signs which could suggest that such moles should be removed for further examination. Luckily, on closer inspection, none of my moles required further investigation for now, which was certainly a huge relief.

I was also told which of the moles I should keep an eye on over the next few months and that was it. After being quite concerned that one or two of my moles might have gone rogue, I now had peace of mind and felt relieved to have had them screened. I will now also have a follow up routine screening in 12 months, which for someone presenting risk factors like mine makes a lot of sense.

If you have any concerns about abnormal moles or skin cancer, then make sure you seek medical help and if you want further information about 108 Harley Street's screening service please contact Hamish Millar on 0207 563 1234 www.108harleystreet.co.uk or contact your PDM or The RPA office on 020 8831 7930.

