

Melanoma Screening Navigation Script



This document supports your conversations with melanoma screening candidates. Development of the navigation script is based on field research, conducted with a diverse set of men and women in a high-risk area, to identify common misperceptions to being screened for melanoma.

This navigation script is intended to help you convey the importance of understanding melanoma screening and address those misperceptions in order to detect melanoma as early as possible.

The goal of a conversation is to motivate eligible candidates to consider scheduling a full-body skin examination.

Please note that this resource is for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical advice. Please refer to your organization's guidelines when discussing melanoma screening with patients and advise them to consult their healthcare providers for all medical advice or questions.

Please keep in mind that patients may have various concerns ranging from simple educational needs to complex emotional fears. In addition, screening candidates will have varying levels of education and understanding about melanoma and melanoma screening.

You may find the following framework useful when answering questions:

1

CLARIFY

Ask questions to learn the nature of their questions/concerns to ensure that you are addressing their true concerns.

2

EMPATHIZE

Acknowledge that all questions/concerns are valid and express empathy (if applicable).

3

RESPOND

Respond to questions/concerns with transparency and specificity. Address the importance of considering melanoma screening and early detection.

4

SCHEDULE

After all questions and concerns have been addressed, check if he/she has a melanoma screening scheduled. If not, ask if you can assist by scheduling a screening appointment at this time. If there are still concerns, a follow-up may be required at a later time.

1

Please note that the scripts provided here are not a comprehensive and final list of responses, but rather are intended to act as guideposts that can spur additional responses, depending on the specific scenario and screening candidate's concern.

Here is an example of how the framework may be used*

CONVERSATION FLOW	EXAMPLE SCRIPT
<p>Introduce yourself.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Hello. My name is _____. Thank you for calling. How can I help you today?”</i>
<p>Screening candidate states, <i>“I saw some information about melanoma and I wanted to know more.”</i></p>	
<p>Ask clarifying questions to better understand the reason for the call.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I’m happy that you called. What can I help you with in regard to melanoma screening?”</i>
<p>Screening candidate states, <i>“I have felt perfectly fine and always use protection on my skin. I haven’t had a sunburn since I was young, and do not have any history or family members with melanoma.”</i></p>	
<p>Empathize to convey that you understand the concern.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Thank you for sharing. You’re not alone in wondering if melanoma screening is something you should consider.”</i>
<p>Respond directly to address the screening candidate’s concerns. Help address any misperceptions about screening with these sample statements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Melanoma is one of the most aggressive kinds of cancer.”¹</i> • <i>“You can still get melanoma with no known risk factors.”²</i> • <i>“While melanoma can happen to anyone, a total body skin exam can help detect cancer at an early stage.”²</i> <p>[Consider providing the screening candidate specific details about their geographic location. For example, if the candidate is in Utah, mention that:]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Utah has more than 2 times more melanoma than most states in America.”³</i> • <i>“Melanoma is increasing at a higher rate in Utah than anywhere else in the United States.”⁴</i> • <i>“According to the American Cancer Society, screening tests like full-body skin exams can help find melanoma when it is the most treatable.”²</i>
<p>Schedule: If the screening candidate is comfortable, ensure that he/she is scheduled for a screening.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Can I help you make an appointment to get screened?”</i>
<p>If the screening candidate states he/she is not ready to make an appointment, offer to follow up at a later date.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“It’s okay if you aren’t ready to make an appointment today.”</i> • <i>“Would it be okay if I check in with you in a couple of months?”</i> <p>[Flag for follow-up conversation.]</p>

Addressing Screening Misperceptions

Healthcare providers should always use their professional medical judgment.

Below, you will find some common beliefs and examples of possible responses.

Keep in mind that one of the most important things you can do is to connect with patients at risk for melanoma.

BELIEF 1

I don't have a family history and live a healthy lifestyle.

BELIEF 2

I don't get a lot of sun, always cover up, and only had a few sunburns in my life.

BELIEF 3

A full-body skin exam won't change anything for me if I have melanoma.

BELIEF 4

I feel fine. If a suspicious mole shows up, I'll deal with it then.

BELIEF 5

Melanoma isn't that serious. Like other skin cancers, it can be quickly removed.

BELIEF 6

My doctor has never mentioned melanoma screening.

BELIEF/CONCERN	EXAMPLE RESPONSES
<p>BELIEF 1</p> <p>I don't have a family history and live a healthy lifestyle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "You're at risk to get melanoma if you have ANY of the following risk factors⁵: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Living at a higher elevation – Both men and women over 50 years old – Having lighter skin – Spending time outside in the sun – A family history of skin cancer – Frequent sunburns – Use of tanning beds" • "You can still get melanoma with no known risk factors."²
<p>BELIEF 2</p> <p>I don't get a lot of sun, always cover up, and only had a few sunburns in my life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Melanoma can appear in areas on your body that don't get any sun."^{2,6-8} • "You can get melanoma without getting sunburned."^{2,6-8} <p>[If screening candidate lives in Utah]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Living in Utah, you are at risk. In fact, Utah has more than 2 times more melanoma than most states in America."³ • "Melanoma is increasing at a higher rate in Utah than anywhere else in the United States."⁴
<p>BELIEF 3</p> <p>A full-body skin exam won't change anything for me if I have melanoma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Melanoma screenings can help detect cancer at an early stage."⁹

Addressing Screening Misperceptions (cont)

BELIEF/CONCERN	EXAMPLE RESPONSES
BELIEF 4 I feel fine. If a suspicious mole shows up, I'll deal with it then.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"Even if you feel fine, melanoma screening is important."</i>¹⁰• <i>"Melanoma can be hiding in plain sight because it is often diagnosed in hard-to-see areas of the body."</i>^{2,11,12}• <i>"Regular checks by your doctor can help find areas that could be melanoma or might turn into it someday."</i>¹³• <i>"Only a doctor can diagnose melanoma early."</i>¹³• <i>"Your doctor can check places you can't and may see something you don't."</i>²
BELIEF 5 Melanoma isn't that serious. Like other skin cancers, it can be quickly removed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"Melanoma is one of the most aggressive kinds of cancer. It can spread to other parts of your body."</i>¹• <i>"It also affects more people than you think. One person dies of melanoma every hour."</i>⁵
BELIEF 6 My doctor has never mentioned melanoma screening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"One person dies of melanoma every hour."</i>⁵• <i>"It is important to talk openly to your doctor so you can make the best choice for you and your family."</i> <p>[If screening candidate lives in Utah]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"Living in Utah, you are at risk. In fact, Utah has more than 2 times more melanoma than most states in America."</i>³• <i>"Melanoma is growing faster in Utah than anywhere else in the United States."</i>⁴

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

There are many other scenarios in which a screening candidate may need clarifying information about melanoma screening. Always use your best professional judgment in answering questions/concerns.

Melanoma Information

QUESTION	EXAMPLE RESPONSES
QUESTION 1: What is melanoma?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"Melanoma happens when the cells that give your skin its color begin to grow out of control and form cancer cells."</i>⁶• <i>"Melanoma comes in all shapes and sizes."</i>^{2,8}• <i>"Melanoma is often diagnosed in hard-to-see areas and can appear in areas that don't get any sun."</i>^{2,14}
QUESTION 2: How serious is melanoma?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"Melanoma is one of the most aggressive kinds of cancer."</i>^{1,5}• <i>"Melanoma can spread to other parts of your body."</i>¹• <i>"One person dies of melanoma every hour."</i>⁵
QUESTION 3: Why should I be screened for melanoma?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"One person dies of melanoma every hour."</i>⁵• <i>"Only a doctor can diagnose melanoma early."</i>¹³• <i>"Melanoma is often diagnosed in hard-to-see areas on the body."</i>^{2,14}• <i>"Your doctor can check places you can't and may see something you don't."</i>²• <i>"The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends that you do a head-to-toe self-examination of your skin every month."</i>¹⁵

Frequently Asked Questions (cont)

Screening for Melanoma

QUESTION	EXAMPLE RESPONSES
QUESTION 4: How do you screen for melanoma?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>“A melanoma screening is called a Total Body Skin Exam.”</i>• <i>“Your doctor takes a close look at all your skin, from head to toe. This includes hard-to-see areas like your back, feet, scalp, under your nails, and private parts.”²</i>• <i>“Your doctor may use a special tool called a dermatoscope to examine moles that are hard to see with just your eye.”¹⁶</i>
QUESTION 5: Who performs the screening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>“Your primary care provider or dermatologist will perform the screening.”</i>
QUESTION 6: How long does a melanoma screening take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>“A typical skin exam usually only takes about 20 minutes.”¹⁷</i>
QUESTION 7: Are there any risks to having a melanoma screening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>“A skin exam has no side effects – it is just a visual check of the skin.”</i>• <i>“As with any screening, there is a risk that your doctor may not find melanoma even if you have it.”</i>

Frequently Asked Questions (cont)

Cost/Logistics

QUESTION	EXAMPLE RESPONSES
<p>QUESTION 8: How much does a melanoma screening cost?</p>	<p>*Note: Preventive melanoma screening is not generally covered by Medicare. <i>[If uninsured]:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “If you need to access free care, the following websites can help you find a free clinic¹⁸: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics. – Partnership for Prescription Assistance. – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.”
<p>QUESTION 9: Do you have assistance to help me get to my melanoma screening?</p>	

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