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Andy Cohen Was Diagnosed With Skin Cancer Thanks To Kelly Ripa

She knew something was off with the spot on his lip.



Andy Cohen isn't one to hold back, and on Friday's *Live with Kelly*, the *Watch What Happens* host detailed how Kelly Ripa urged him to get a suspicious dot on his lip checked out—and it wound up being melanoma, a serious form of skin cancer.

“I want to say, by the way, that I have to shout you out for something that you don't know I'm going to shout you out for. But I had this black dot on my bottom lip, and you and I were at a party for Anderson [Cooper]'s mom in April. And you said, ‘You have a black dot on your lip. I don't think that's something good,’” Cohen said on the show.

Cohen says Ripa and her husband Mark Consuelos insisted that he get it checked out. "I didn't because I was like, 'Oh no, I'm sure it's nothing. It's just a black dot.' And she kept on me," he said. Ripa said she repeatedly reminded Cohen to see a dermatologist to get the dot checked out. "I'm like a dog with a bone. He would text me, and I'd be like, 'You get your lip checked out yet, boo?'" she said. Finally, Cohen caved and discovered the dot was melanoma.

"They removed it, the whole thing, and I just want to thank you because you were so dogmatic," Cohen said, adding that "it's all fine" now that he had a "chunk" of his lip removed. "I am tanorexic. I love the sun, I really do," he added "But just be careful. And I, of course, thought that that kind of thing would never happen to me, and it will change my relationship to the sun. But you really helped me out there. And thank you for staying on me."

Melanoma is the most deadly form of skin cancer, and its rates have been rising for the past 30 years. According to the American Cancer Society, an estimated 76,380 new melanomas will be diagnosed this year, and more than 10,000 people will die of the disease in 2016.

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Melanomas can be brown, black, red, or can take the form of a small growth, Jill Waibel, M.D., owner of the Miami Dermatology and Laser Institute in Miami, tells SELF. Unfortunately, they typically have little or no symptoms, making it hard for someone to identify that they have one, she says.

In order to catch melanoma, it's important to get your skin checked regularly, Gary Goldenberg, M.D., medical director of the Dermatology Faculty Practice at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, tells SELF. "This is even more important for those with a long history of sun exposure and with history of sunburns before the age of 18," he says. The American Academy of Dermatologists recommends asking your dermatologist how often you should get your skin checked based on your individual risk, but many recommend you get checked out at least once a year.

Goldenberg says it's ideal to have a dermatologist check your spots instead of a general practitioner because primary care doctors usually don't have the same level of training to spot abnormal lesions. "A lot of what dermatologists do is preventative medicine—pre-malignant or atypical lesions may be found and removed before they turn cancerous, preventing skin cancer altogether," he says. Cynthia Bailey, M.D., a diplomat of the American Board of Dermatology and president and CEO of Advanced Skin Care and Dermatology Inc., agrees. "It is important to get skin spots checked by a trained eye because catching skin cancer early can make the difference between life or death," she tells SELF.

Skin cancer cells grow over time and, if found early, there's a lower chance that they will spread, reducing the odds that the cancer will be deadly. In those cases, the lesions are also usually smaller and require a smaller surgery to remove them, resulting in a smaller scar, Goldenberg says.

If in between your regular screenings, you notice something strange on your skin, you shouldn't wait to get it looked at. "Any spot that is new, changing, or that looks different from the other spots on your skin needs to be checked. If a spot is itching or bleeding, that is suspicious, too," Bailey says. She recommends taking a photo of any weird lesions and bringing it in to your doctor's appointment to help your dermatologist better understand if a spot is changing, as well as how quickly it may be doing so.

Since you probably aren't BFFs with Kelly Ripa and can't rely on her to tell you to get your skin checked, set a calendar alert in your phone as a reminder, or keep a standing appointment with your doctor as often as they think it's necessary. And, as always, wearing sunscreen daily is key.