

What is Squamous cell cancer and what does it look like?

Squamous cell skin cancer is the second most common type of skin cancer. It arises from the outer layer of the skin. Squamous cell carcinoma can occur anywhere on the skin but is most common on the face and arms. It often appears as an opaque or scaling patch or bump in sun-exposed areas, and may be mistaken for a wart or patch of dry skin.

Unlike basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma can progress far enough to get into the lymph nodes and blood stream and become a threat to a patient's life. This is more common in large, aggressive squamous cell carcinomas or in cancers on the ears, upper head, lips or genitalia, or skin cancers that have been treated before, but have now come back. The overall chance of any squamous cell carcinoma spreading outside the local region is about 2%, but this can be much higher depending on the location of the cancerous site or other features.