

## OCULAR MELANOMA RISK FACTORS

Although the exact cause of ocular melanoma is not known, certain attributes, characteristics, and exposures make it more likely that a person will develop either uveal or conjunctival melanoma. These risk factors include:

- Light-colored eyes (blue or green)
- Older age
- Light-colored skin
- Certain genetic conditions, such as *BAP1* tumor predisposition syndrome
- Certain inherited skin conditions that cause abnormal moles, such as dysplastic nevus syndrome
- Abnormal skin pigmentation involving the eyelids or increased pigmentation on the uvea
- A mole in the eye or on the eye's surface\*
- A lump on the eye or eyelid
- Exposure to natural sunlight or artificial sunlight (such as from tanning beds) over long periods of time (more specific to conjunctival)
- Exposure to welding

If you have none of the risk factors listed above, the American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends that you get a baseline eye disease screening at age 40. If you have any of these risk factors, make an appointment with your ophthalmologist for a comprehensive eye exam.

\*Please know that benign choroidal nevi are very common, and only a minority may become cancerous.

## ABOUT Mollie's Fund & AIM at Melanoma

As a sophomore in college, Mollie Biggane discovered a mole on her thigh. In the following six months, she underwent surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. The **Mollie Biggane Melanoma Foundation** was created in her memory after her tragic death at the age of twenty. The mission of Mollie's Fund is to increase awareness for melanoma prevention, provide information and services on skin cancer detection, and support melanoma patients through education of the latest treatments.

**AIM at Melanoma** is a global foundation dedicated to finding more effective treatments and, ultimately, the cure for melanoma, while improving the lives of those it affects. AIM directs and funds paradigm-shifting research initiatives; educates patients, healthcare professionals, and the public; and advocates for survivors and their families, with the goal of ending this disease in our lifetime.

# OCULAR MELANOMA

## DETECTION TO DIAGNOSIS

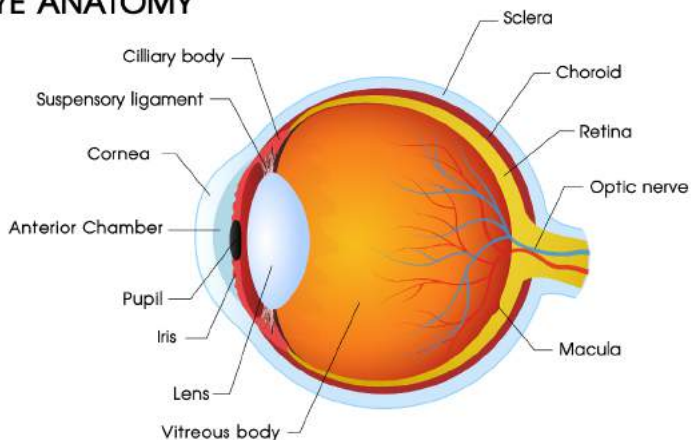


**OCULAR MELANOMA IS THE  
MOST COMMON PRIMARY  
CANCER OF THE EYE IN  
ADULTS**

## WHERE OCULAR MELANOMA OCCURS

Ocular melanoma most often affects the middle layer of your eye (the uvea), which includes the colored portion (iris), the muscle fibers around the lens (ciliary body), and the layer of blood vessels that lines the back of the eye (choroid). Melanoma can also develop in the conjunctiva, the clear tissue that covers the white part of the eye and the inside of the eyelids.

### EYE ANATOMY



# WHAT IS OCULAR MELANOMA?

*And how is it different from other forms of melanoma?*

Melanoma is commonly considered a form of skin cancer because it develops in the melanocytes--the cells in our skin that produce pigment--and because most cases of melanoma occur on the skin. But melanocytes exist in other places in our bodies, including in our eyes and mucous membranes, so melanoma can occur in these locations, too. **Ocular melanoma is a rare form of melanoma that develops in the melanocytes in or around the eye.** There are two general types of ocular melanoma: uveal and conjunctival. Although both of these melanomas develop in the eye, they are biologically and clinically different from one another, and both are very different from the more common form of melanoma occurring on the skin.

## FACT:

Ocular melanoma is diagnosed in about 2,500 people each year in the U.S.



## Ocular Melanoma Symptoms

In its early stages, ocular melanoma may not cause any symptoms, but when symptoms do occur, they can include:

- A dark spot on the iris or conjunctiva
- Blurred or distorted vision
- The sensation of flashing, or specks in your vision
- A change in the shape of the pupil
- Loss of peripheral vision

See an ophthalmologist immediately if you have any of the symptoms listed above.

## A Comprehensive Eye Examination Should Include:

- ✓ Complete medical history
- ✓ Visual acuity test
- ✓ External examination – eye lids, tear ducts, areas around the eye
- ✓ Measurement of intraocular pressure
- ✓ Dilation (widening) of the pupils with eye drops, which may result in temporary sunlight sensitivity and blurriness
- ✓ Slit lamp exam and indirect ophthalmoscopy – an examination of the retina, optic disc, choroid and blood vessels through the pupil with a special instrument that shines a bright light into the eye.

