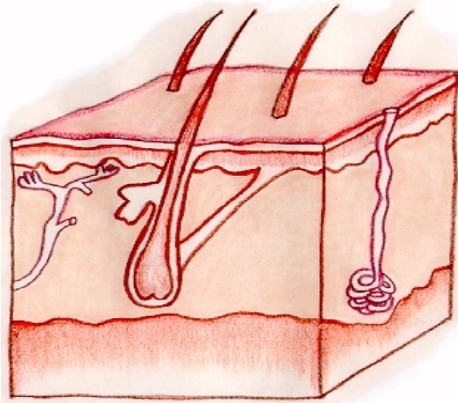


Women's Cancer Information Project

Coordinated by the European Institute of Women's Health

About Skin



In humans, the skin covers the body, protecting it from water loss and physical damage. The skin helps regulate the body temperature. It contains 'sense' organs or receptors which help us adjust to our surroundings.

The skin is made up of 3 layers:

- [Epidermis](#)
- [Dermis](#)
- [Subcutaneous Layer](#)

As newly formed cells are pushed to the surface, they flatten and harden then eventually die. Hardening is caused by a protein called keratin. Certain cells produce melanin, the pigment responsible for skin colour. When you sunbathe, these cells become busy producing melanin. This is done to protect the skin from the UV radiation in sunlight. Skin cancers are the commonest cancers in Ireland accounting for 26% of female cancers and 22.4% of male cancers. Approximately 6,000-7,000 new cases of skin cancer occur every year in Ireland.
