

# Do elevated mercury levels in the blood increase skin cancer risk?

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**More information:** *British Journal of Dermatology* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/bjd.18797](https://doi.org/10.1111/bjd.18797)



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Higher levels of mercury in the blood were linked with a higher prevalence of non-melanoma skin cancer, the most common human malignancy, in a study published in the *British Journal of Dermatology*.

For the study, researchers analyzed 2003-2016 data on 29,413 participants in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. The team examined blood levels of different forms of mercury: total mercury, [inorganic mercury](#), and methyl mercury. Compared with individuals with low total mercury, those with high total mercury had nearly double the odds of being diagnosed with non-melanoma skin cancer. Similarly, participants with high methyl mercury had a 1.7-times greater odds of non-melanoma skin cancer compared with those with low methyl mercury. Inorganic mercury levels were non-significantly but positively associated with non-melanoma skin cancer.

Most individuals in the United States are exposed to mercury through consumption of contaminated fish and shellfish.

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