

# RUDGWICK MEDICAL CENTRE

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## TIPS FOR TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS

This is critical:

**Please check your photo BEFORE you send it by zooming in and making sure it is not blurry - a photo can be badly blurred but look OK on a phone or camera screen unless you zoom in. Blurry photos or photos not clearly showing the area of concern make it impossible for the doctor examining your photo to give good advice and will significantly delay you getting advice as they will likely just recommend you take another photo before providing any comment.**

**It's also very helpful if you hold a ruler next to moles when you take the photo – to both help with focus and the confirm the scale.**

If you want more advice on taking a good quality photo, then these are some tips

You can use a phone camera or digital camera. If using a phone use the main camera on the back of the phone. Using the front camera on the phone which is often used for “selfies” does not take photos of the same quality.

Have someone else take the photo for you if possible as they can generally hold the camera more steadily and adjust the frame more accurately which will result in a higher quality of photo.

Check that your camera lens is clean.

Move to a bright area with lots of natural light but avoid direct sunlight (low light makes it much more likely the photo will be blurry and impossible for the doctor to give good advice). If feasible turn off the flash as it can light up skin unevenly. Make sure the light is shining onto the skin, and your assistant doesn't cast a shadow over the area being photographed. If the light source is behind, the detail is lost whereas if the light source is shining on the skin, with no shadows.

Place the area to be photographed on a plain background (such as a plain towel, sheet, or wall) if possible - ideally this should be a neutral colour such as grey or light blue. A white background can cause the photograph to be too dark, and a black background can cause the photograph to be too light.

Hold the camera on a still surface (for example a chair) and make sure the area to be photographed is held still, ideally by resting it on a surface and trying to hold still. Resting a foot on the floor makes it much easier to focus.

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**Dr David Mckenzie**

**Associate GP's**

**Dr Justine Hall Dr Taraneh Khalafpour**

**An orientation photo** - stand 1 metre away from the area of interest and take the photo. This shows where the problem is and how big an area it covers. Try to show the whole area affected if it is a rash, including both sides of the body if possible - by showing both elbows we can see that the rash only affects one side

**A close-up photo** - move your camera 10-12cm (4-5in) from the area that you are photographing. On most phones you can touch the part of the screen you want the camera to focus on. If you get too close the camera won't be able to focus. The focus is the most important thing - don't worry about getting too close, just try to get as close as you can to achieve a sharp focus. For the close-up photo it is often better to have the light source coming slightly from the side, to highlight any change in skin texture.

**A sideways on photo for a raised area** - if the area is raised then a sideways on photo can be very helpful as well. Make sure the size of the affected area is clear either by putting a coin or ruler in the photo (without covering the area) or by taking the photo from a little further away. If though you are only able to send one photo of a skin lesion, then a close-up photo would be the most suitable.

If it's not clear what you're worried about (for example a specific mole) then add some arrows to indicate the area of concern.

Take a few photos and only send the best. Check that the image/s are in focus and easy to see. The body part area needs to look the same on the screen as it does in real life. If given the option reduce the image file size to between 500Kb and 1Mb.