

What is a Dermatologist?

A dermatologist is a qualified specialist doctor who treats people with skin diseases.

Who do they treat?

Dermatologists treat patients of all ages, from babies and children to adolescents and adults.

What do they treat?

Common skin conditions such as:

Skin cancer	Psoriasis	Contact dermatitis
Acne	Warts	Skin infections
Tinea	Hair and Nails disorders	Cosmetic problems
Eczema	Moles	Other rarer skin diseases

In Australia dermatologists treat skin diseases caused by exposure to the sun such as skin cancers which include:

Basal cell carcinomas
Squamous cell carcinomas
Malignant melanomas

How do Dermatologists train?

Dermatologists are initially trained as medical doctors. This is followed by several years of full-time practice and training in a teaching hospital as a junior hospital doctor. Application can then be made to enter a five-year training program in dermatology.

Before entering the Australasian College of Dermatologists' training program, prospective trainees undertake additional study and scientific research in dermatology.

After passing the Fellowship examination and satisfactorily completing the training program, a trainee is recommended for Fellowship of the Australasian College of Dermatologists (FACD). Many dermatologists then travel to dermatological centres overseas to gain post-Fellowship training or be involved in clinical and experimental research. Dermatologists maintain their professional standards and develop new skills through participation in the College's continuing professional development program.

What treatments do dermatologists use?

Many skin diseases are treated with topical therapy, such as creams and lotions. In Australia, surgery is widely used by dermatologists in the treatment of skin cancers, including melanomas. Radiotherapy is also used in treating skin cancers.

Recent advances in therapy include ultraviolet light therapy, photodynamic therapy, laser therapy and drug treatment.

Where do dermatologists work?

In Australia, they work mainly in private practice and public clinics.

Dermatologists at public hospital clinics treat patients and teach medical students, interns, residents and registrars.

They run courses and tutorials for general practitioners and other specialists.

Professorial departments of dermatology in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland conduct research projects.

The Skin and Cancer Foundations in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland also participate in research projects as well as offering more sub-specialised services in dermatology.

For more detailed information see the website of the Australasian College of Dermatologists

www.dermcoll.asn.au.