

MELANOMA & SKIN CANCER AWARENESS

May is Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection & Prevention Month

Skin Cancer Can Almost Always Be Cured When Found and Treated Early

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the U.S. and is most frequently caused by UV rays from the sun, tanning booths or sunlamps.

Prevention and early detection are your best weapons against fighting back! Please read the following summary to learn more about how you can protect yourself and raise awareness.

01 | Prevention

Some risk factors, such as age, gender, race and family history cannot be controlled; however, there is much you can do to lower your risk of melanoma and skin cancer – the main focus being limiting your exposure to UV (ultraviolet) radiation:

- Stay out of the sun between 10 am and 4 pm
- Wear protective clothing, sunglasses and a hat
- Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher, reapplying every 2 hours
- Avoid tanning beds and sunlamps
- Taking extra precautions if you have a weakened immune system

Having a weakened immune system also increases your likelihood for developing skin cancer and melanoma. Avoiding known risk factors for HIV, as well as being more cautious if you have a weakened immune system or take medications that may suppress the body's defenses can help reduce the threat of skin cancer.

02 | Detection

Skin cancer prevention and detection must be practiced year-round. On a monthly basis, you should examine your skin from head-to-toe, looking for suspicious moles or lesions. Take note of any new moles or growths, and any existing growths that have changed. Lesions that itch, bleed or don't heal are also signs of alarm.

Moles, brown spots and growths are usually harmless, but not always. If you have more than 100 moles, you are at a greater risk for melanoma. Use the ABCDE's of Melanoma as a guide to look for the following warning signs. If you have one or more, make an appointment with your medical provider for further examination.

- A – Asymmetry (two sides not matching)
- B – Border (uneven borders)
- C – Color (multiple colors in one growth)
- D – Diameter (larger than a pencil eraser)
- E – Evolving (change in size, shape, color, etc.)

03 | Awareness

How can you get involved in raising awareness?

- Encourage your family to adopt good habits together
- Identify youth leaders in your community who can talk to their peers about skin cancer prevention
- Partner with a local hospital, fair or similar organization to host a skin cancer screening event

For more information on Melanoma/Skin Cancer Awareness Month, please visit:

<https://healthfinder.gov/nho/MayToolkit2.aspx>

Did You Know?
Only 1 in 3 adults regularly uses sunscreen

References

<http://www.cancer.org/cancer/skincancer-melanoma/detailedguide/melanoma-skin-cancer-prevention>

<http://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-information/melanoma/melanoma-warning-signs-and-images/do-you-know-your-abcdes#>