

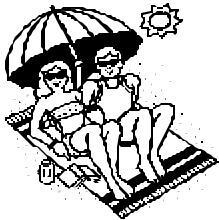
Sun Exposure and Cancer

Premature aging of the skin (wrinkles and spots) and skin cancer are preventable. Both are the results of over-exposure to the sun.

The incidence of skin cancer is rapidly increasing in the U.S. It is now the most common form of cancer. Your chance of developing skin cancer in your lifetime is 1 in 7. More than 90% of all skin cancer is caused by excessive exposure to the sun's radiation. Cases of malignant melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, has been doubling each decade.

Use Sunscreen!

No matter how fair or dark skinned you are, use of a sunscreen of SPF 15 or greater is very important. Sun protection factor (SPF) is the ratio of time required to produce redness of skin with the proper application of a sunscreen, compared to using no sunscreen. In other words, if the sunscreen has SPF 15, it would take you 15 times as long to burn using the sunscreen as opposed to not using a sunscreen at all. Appropriate use of a sunscreen also prevents the breakdown of the skin's elasticity, thereby preventing wrinkles. Sunscreen should



be applied one-half to one hour before going out in the sun, and should be reapplied every 2 to 3 hours. The water resistant sunscreens need to be reapplied also.

What Causes Skin Cancer?

Six major factors that increase your risk of developing skin cancer, especially malignant melanoma, are:

1. Blistering sunburn during the teen years.
2. Three or more years at outdoor summer jobs as a young person.
3. Blonde or red hair, fair skin.
4. Obvious freckling on upper back.
5. Rough red bumps on skin known as actinic keratosis.
6. A family history of melanoma.

How About Prevention?

Since you can't do anything to change your family history and genetics, the two factors you can do something about are using a sunscreen and not getting burned as a teenager. Additional ways to minimize your risk of skin cancer are:

1. Avoid going out in the sun between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., April thru September.
2. Be aware of reflective surfaces that increase your sun exposure - sand, snow, concrete and water.
3. Stay away from tanning booths.
4. Wear wide-brimmed hats and lightweight cover-up clothing.

Remember, overexposure to the sun has a cumulative effect during your lifetime.



What To Look For

Early detection of skin cancer can save your life. If you have any of the following, see your health care practitioner right away:

1. A mole or pigmented spot that exhibits:
 - A. Asymmetry - one half unlike the other half.
 - B. Border irregularity - scalloped or poorly circumscribed border.
 - C. Color varied - different from one area to another; shades of tan and brown, black or sometimes white, red or blue.
 - D. Diameter larger than 6mm (diameter of a pencil eraser).

These A, B, C, D's may be signs of malignant melanoma.

2. An open sore or wound that does not heal after more than four weeks.
3. A skin lesion that continues to itch, hurt, crust, scab, erode or bleed.

