



“Here Comes the Sun”

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Skin Cancer Checkups:

See your doctor for a skin exam:

- Every 3 years if you are 20-39 years old.
- Every year if you are age 40 or over.
- Immediately if you have noticed any changes in your skin, moles, or freckles.

Perform a monthly self exam

-Become familiar with any moles, freckles or other abnormalities on your skin.

-Use a mirror to check areas you can't see.

Skin Cancer

What is Skin Cancer?

Our skin protects the body against heat and light, injury, and infection. It also helps regulate body temperature, stores water and fats, and produces Vitamin D. The skin is the largest organ of the body and is made up of two layers, the dermis (derm'is) or inner layer and the epidermis (ep-i-derm'is) or the outer layer.



Skin cancers evolve due to abnormal changes in the cells found in the outer layer of the skin. There are several types of cancer involving specific cells found in the epidermis: non-melanoma (basal and squamos cells) and melanoma (melanocytes). The most serious type is melanoma. Melanoma is associated with infrequent but excessive sunbathing resulting in a sunburn. It is caused by ultraviolet (UV) radiation either from the sun or tanning beds.

Who Gets Skin Cancer?

Skin cancer is more common in

people with light colored skin who have spent a lot of time in the sun. Fair skinned people are most susceptible because they are born with the least amount of protective melanin. Redheads, blue-eyed blonds, and people with pigment disorders such as albinism are at the greatest risk.

People with many freckles or moles may also be vulnerable to skin cancer, especially if the moles or freckles look abnormal. Skin cancer is about three times more common in men than in women, and the risk increases with age. Most people diagnosed with skin cancer are between 40 and 60 years of age, although forms of the disease are appearing in much younger people. Be sure to remember that everyone, including people with very brown skin, can get sunburned if they don't take proper precautions.

Risk Factors

It is estimated that 1 out of 7 people in the U.S. will develop some form of skin cancer during their lifetime.

Prevention: What Can I Do?

Stay out of the sun, especially between **10:00 am and 4 pm**.

Wear a broad brimmed hat, a shirt, and sunglasses when out in the sun.

Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher, and reapply it often.

Do not use tanning beds or sunlamps.

Protect young children from excessive sun exposure.

Check your skin regularly for abnormal or changing areas, especially moles, and have them examined by your doctor.

One serious sunburn can increase your risk by as much as 50%.



Do you have any of these risk factors?

- * Do you sunbath and/or use tanning booths?
- * Are you fair skinned with blond or red hair?
- * Did you have a severe sunburn as a child?
- * Do you sunburn easily or have many freckles?
- * Do you spend a lot of time outdoors?
- * Do you have a family history of skin cancer?

Sources:

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