

Skin Cancer Awareness

Even though skin cancer is one of the most preventable forms of cancer, it is still the most diagnosed form of cancer in the United States. The most common forms of skin cancer are melanoma, basal cell carcinoma, and squamous cell carcinoma. Basal cell and squamous cell are the most common and are rarely fatal, but can cause serious disfigurement if left untreated. Forty to 50 percent of adults who reach age 65 will develop one of these at least once in their lifetime! Melanoma is the third most common kind and can spread deeper in the skin to lymph nodes and can be fatal if left untreated.

SKIN CANCER PREVENTION

Seek Shade

Try to stay in the shade as much as possible, especially between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when the sun's rays are the strongest.

Lather Up

Not just at the beach! Using a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher every day, especially on your face, is recommended. Make sure your sunscreen blocks both UVA and UVB rays (broad spectrum). For extended outdoor time, a water resistant kind with an SPF of 30 or higher should be used. One ounce should be applied to your skin about 30 minutes before going outside. Sunscreen should be reapplied every 2 hours or right after swimming or excessive sweating. Newborns should never be kept in the sun. Sunscreen can be used once babies reach 6 months old.

Cover Up

It is important to use clothing as a barrier to the sun when outdoors. Sunscreen is not always enough. Broad brimmed hats, umbrellas, and sunglasses are helpful. Skin that is unprotected can be damaged within 15 minutes.



Avoid Burning and Tanning

Do not let your skin burn or become red from the sun. This indicates serious damage and increases your risk of cancers. Tanning in any fashion can increase your risk of skin cancers because any change of color in your skin can indicate damage. Be sure to avoid indoor tanning and tanning booths.

Get Annual Checks

You should have a skin exam once a year by your physician or a dermatologist to make sure everything looks OK and catch symptoms as early as possible. Always examine yourself often as well!

CANCER SYMPTOMS

- Any change on the skin, especially in the size or color of a mole, or other darkly pigmented growth or spot, or even a new growth
- Scaliness, oozing, bleeding, or change in the appearance of a bump or mole
- The spread of pigmentation (color) beyond its border, such as dark coloring that spreads past the edge of a mole or mark
- A change in sensation, itchiness, tenderness, or pain

If you notice any of these symptoms, you should consult your doctor immediately.

RISK FACTORS OF SKIN CANCER

- Fair or lighter natural skin, hair, and eye color
- Family history of skin cancer
- A history of sunburns or skin cancer
- A history of indoor tanning
- Certain types of moles
- A large number of moles or freckles
- Daily high sun exposure during work or play
- Older age



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For support from a registered nurse or wellness coach or to ask questions, please call a Blues On CallSM health coach at **1-888-BLUE-428**.

Log in to the member website listed on the back of your member ID card.

- Click on the **Wellness** tab.
- Click on **Additional Resources** on the left.
- Click on **Health Topics** under **WebMD health information** to search health topics or use the medical encyclopedia to review health issues.

This article does not provide medical advice. It is intended for informational purposes only. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Consult your physician before participating in activities described in this article.