



Sun Safety

A Brief Summary

Skin cancer is considered an epidemic. Over one million new cases are expected this year. One in five Americans is expected to eventually get skin cancer, chiefly caused by exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation in sunlight. Health experts classify UV rays in the same group as other cancer-causing agents like asbestos, arsenic, and tobacco smoke. Both sunburns and tanning are outward signs of internal skin damage.

Personal Risk Factors

While anyone can get skin cancer – regardless of skin color – those with light skin are at greater risk. People are more likely to develop skin cancer if they have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Fair skin
- Blue, green, or hazel eyes
- Light-colored hair
- Freckles
- A tendency to burn rather than tan
- A history of severe sunburns
- Have many moles (over 50)
- A personal or family history of skin cancer.
- Outdoor worker

Timing and Environmental Sun Safety Issues

UV radiation is more intense during certain times of the day and under specific conditions:

- From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- When there is a lack of thick cloud cover
- From mid-spring through mid-fall (also during winter at higher elevations)
- At higher altitudes. (UV rays concentrate an extra 5 percent for each 1,000 foot increase in elevation.)

It is important to remember that outdoor work environments – especially between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., from March through October – can be likened to a radiation chamber.

Skin Cancer Prevention

The recommended practices for preventing skin cancer are:

- Wear a wide-brimmed hat (at least 4-inch brim).
- Wear tightly woven, loose-fitting clothing that covers as much of the body as possible, weather permitting.
- Reduce sun exposure from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., when UV rays are strongest.
- When feasible, stay in the shade (trees, physical structures).
- Wear sunglasses that provide 99 – 100 percent UVA and UVB (broad-spectrum) protection.
- Liberally apply sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) – broad-spectrum (UVA and UVB) – to exposed skin 15 minutes before going outdoors.
- Use lip balm with a SPF of 30 or higher.
- Avoid tanning salons, booths, and sunlamps.

Learn more about preventing skin cancer by visiting _____



Cover up!

