Preventing Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is the most common of all cancer types. More than 5 million skin cancers are diagnosed each year in the United States. That’s more than all other cancers combined. Skin cancer rates have been on the rise over the past few decades. The good news is that you can do a lot to protect yourself and your family from skin cancer.

UV RAYS FROM THE SUN CAUSE DNA DAMAGE, LEADING TO SKIN CANCER AND AGING

UV rays from the sun cause DNA damage, leading to skin cancer and aging.

- Dark patches
- Wrinkles
- Loose skin
- Premature aging
- Sunburns
- Eye problems

UVA and UVB rays cause DNA damage, which greatly increases skin cancer risk.

ANYONE CAN GET SKIN CANCER, BUT BE EXTRA CAREFUL IF YOU ...

- Have natural blond or red hair
- Have freckles
- Are fair skinned
- Spend a lot of time outdoors
- Have had skin cancer before
- Live in or travel to tropical climates or high altitudes
- Have had sunburns and burn before tanning
- Have a condition that lowers your immune system
- Have a family history of skin cancer, especially melanoma
- Have a lot of moles or large or irregularly shaped moles (see cancer.org/moles)
- Take medications that make you sensitive to light

PROTECT YOUR SKIN YEAR-ROUND

UV rays are around all the time, no matter what the season.

USE SUNSCREEN

- Broad spectrum protects against both UVA and UVB rays
- SPF 30 ...
- Expiration date lasts 2 to 3 years
- How to apply it
  - Be generous! (about a palmful) should be used to cover the arms, legs, neck, and face.
  - Don’t forget your ears, hands, feet, and under sides of arms.
  - Reapply at least every 2 hours. More often if you’re in and out of water or sweating.

COVER UP THE KIDDIES, TOO

Kids burn more easily. And babies younger than 6 months old should be kept out of direct sunlight.

Together, we can change the course of cancer.

The American Cancer Society is fighting cancer on all fronts. Our mission is to save lives, celebrate lives, and lead the fight for a world without cancer.

Learn More // cancer.org/skincancer
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