

Skin Cancer Overview

Facts

- Skin cancer accounts for nearly **50% all cancer cases** in the U.S., and causes approximately **9,800 deaths** each year
- The three major types of skin cancer are basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma
- Malignant melanoma causes more than 75% of all deaths from skin cancer
- 80% of a person's lifetime exposure to sun comes in the first 18 years of life

What causes it and what can be done to prevent it?

Exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays appears to be the most important factor in developing skin cancer. However, skin cancer is a largely preventable disease when sun protective practices and behaviors are consistently applied and utilized. The following simple measures should be taken to help prevent skin cancer from developing:

- ▼ When outside, wear sunscreens rated SPF 15 or higher. Apply them all over the body, and reapply them frequently (every 2 to 3 hours)
- ▼ Wear loose and protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts and long pants
- ▼ Shade the face, head and neck area by wearing a hat or visor
- ▼ Wear UV-protective sunglasses to protect the eyes from harmful rays
- ▼ Try to find shaded areas for physical activity

Who is most at risk?

Certain individuals are particularly at risk at skin cancer. Some risk factors include:

- Lighter natural skin color
- Blue or green eyes, blond or red hair
- Family history of skin cancer, personal history of skin cancer
- Constant exposure to the sun through work and play
- A history of sunburns early in life
- Skin that burns, freckles, or gets red easily
- Certain types and a large number of moles

Signs and Symptoms

Skin cancer can be found early, increasing the chances recovery. If any of the following symptoms are noticed, you should contact your doctor immediately. Any **changes on the skin**, particularly **sizes or colors of moles** or other growths can indicate developing skin cancer. Oozing or bleeding bumps on the skin should be addressed immediately.

Additional symptoms include **changes in skin sensation** such as itchiness, tenderness or pain.

For more information:

Play it Safe in the Sun

<http://www.cdc.gov/chooseyourcover/guide.htm>

Protecting Children

<http://www.skincancer.org/children/index.php>

Skin Cancer Facts

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/ped_7_1_What_You_Need_To_Know_About_Skin_Cancer.asp?sitearea=PED