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# ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN

JULY 2011

## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: UV SAFETY

It seems each summer more information is released regarding what we should and should not do to protect our skin from the sun. July is UV Safety month, so take the time to take care of your skin and prevent skin cancer for yourself and your family!

Ultraviolet radiation is the main cause of skin cancer. The best way you can prevent skin cancer is to protect your skin from the sun. Although the sun is the main culprit, you can also get UV radiation from tanning booths and sunlamps.

**What is skin cancer?**

Skin cancer is almost always curable if it is found early and treated without delay.

**There are three different kinds of skin cancer:**

**Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC)** – This is the most common type of skin cancer and it affects about two million Americans every year. Usually this type of skin cancer is more common in men, however there are more cases of BCC among women. People who work outside are at high risk. Basal cell carcinomas are easily treated in their early stages.

Continued on the back 



## ***Wear sunglasses that block 100 percent of UV rays.***

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#### **Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC) –**

As with BCC, people who are outside for work or long hours in the sun are more likely to develop this type of skin cancer. Anyone who has had a BCC is also more likely to get SCC. These skin cancer cells can be found anywhere on the body, but are more common in areas that are exposed to the sun such as ears, face, bald scalp, neck, hands, arms, and legs.

**Melanoma –** This is the most serious form of skin cancer. If it is recognized and treated early, it is almost always curable. If it is not, the cancer can advance and spread to other parts of the body, where it becomes hard to treat and can be fatal. While it is not the most common of the skin cancers, it causes the most deaths.

If you see a suspicious mole on your skin, do not delay – speak to your healthcare provider!

***The American Cancer Society estimates that there are about 120,000 new cases of melanoma in the United States each year.***

Anyone can get skin cancer. If you have any of these characteristics you are at a higher risk:

- Light colored skin
- Blond or red hair
- Blue or green eyes

You can help to protect your skin from the sun rays by following these tips!

1. **Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day –** The hottest part of the day is usually from about 10 a.m. till 4 p.m. The sun's rays are the strongest during this time of the day, so try to stay out of the sun.
2. **Always use sunscreen –** You should apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before you go out in the sun and re-apply every 2 hours after that. If you go swimming you will want to

reapply sunscreen when you get out of the water. Even when it is cloudy you can be exposed to the UV rays from the sun. Make sure to use sunscreen.

3. **Wear a hat –** Wearing a hat with a wide brim, along with sunscreen, will help protect your face, neck, and ears.
4. **Wear sunglasses –** Make sure you wear sunglasses that block 100 percent of the UV rays. Wrap around sunglasses are best because they protect the side of your eyes from the sun too.
5. **Wear long sleeves and pants –** If possible wear long sleeves and pants so that you do not have as much skin exposed to the sun.

Check your skin once a month. Check for new moles or areas that you may need to talk to your doctor about.

This summer we want you to enjoy the sun, but please be safe and be kind to your skin!



#### **REFERENCES:**

- Healthfinder.gov. Protect your skin from the sun. April 2011.
- The Skin Cancer Foundation. Understanding UVA and UVB. 2011.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Health effects of overexposure to the sun. July 2010.

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