

1 in 5 Americans will be diagnosed with at least one type of skin cancer in their life.
American Cancer Society

The sun's negative effects are cumulative and irreversible. Typically after age 50 those effects are visible in loss of elasticity, increased wrinkles, leathery skin, age spots, and skin cancer. While skin cancer is the most common cancer it is largely preventable and very curable when diagnosed early.

Risk Factors - Anyone can get skin cancer

- Fair to light skin
- Personal/family history of skin cancer
- Chronic exposure to the sun
- History of severe or frequent sunburns early in life
- Certain types of large or odd shaped skin moles
- Larger number (50 or more) of skin moles
- Weakened immune system caused by certain cancers, organ transplants, radiation therapy, smoking, psoriasis/psoriasis treatments, medication or AIDS
- Skin cancers are more common for those in the "sunbelt" states



Skin Cancer Prevention

- Avoid sun between 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. when it is the strongest
- Wear sunglasses with 99-100% UV absorption to protect eyes and sensitive skin
- Use sunscreen even on cloudy days
- Wear a full brimmed hat with at least a 4 inch brim as up to 80% of skin cancers occur on the head
- Seek out shade when possible
- Cover up with long sleeved shirts and pants to cut down on sun exposure. UV rays still penetrate clothing and skin so it is best to also use sunscreen when outside.
- Tanning beds should be avoided
- Use sunscreen and use it often, more when in water or sweating profusely

Monthly Skin Self-Exam

After a shower or bath examine yourself for moles, birthmarks, blemishes noticing what they look like. Then check monthly for changes in color, shape, size, oozing, crusting, bleeding, roughness, scales, and wounds that do not heal within two weeks. *Always consult your physician regarding changes in your skin.*

Sunscreen and SPF (Sun Protection Factor)

The American Cancer Society recommends using a SPF 15 or higher that screens both UVA and UVB rays. Reapply a good ounce or more of sunscreen every two hours. (There is no such thing as a "sunblock". UV rays are only reduced with sunscreen products.)

SPF numbers tells you how long the product will prevent a burn, depending on your skin tone. *Example:* a fair-skinned person can begin to burn after 10 minutes in bright sunshine. When used properly, a sunscreen rated SPF 4 should allow 40 minutes before skin begins to burn (10 minutes x 4 SPF = 40 minutes; 10 minutes x 15 SPF = 150 minutes).

