



# Don't Let the Sun Spot You<sup>1</sup>

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University Extension<sup>2</sup>

There are three major types of skin cancer:

- **Basal Cell Carcinoma:** Most common form. It looks like a clear spot or small bump that usually forms on the head, neck, or hand. Size can vary.
- **Squamous Cell Carcinoma:** Can start as nodules or as a red, patchy area. These often develop on the lips, face or tops of the ears.
- **Malignant Melanoma:** Least common, but most deadly.

Use the ABCD rule in detecting a melanoma.

**Asymmetry:** the two halves look different

**Border Irregularity:** the edges are ragged

**Color:** the color is not uniform

**Diameter:** if it is the size of a pencil eraser or bigger, get it checked out.

## PREVENTION

- Don't go outside between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and clothes with a tight weave.
- Wear sunglasses that filter at least 90 percent of the UV rays
- Use a sunscreen of SPF 15 or greater

- Do a monthly mole check to catch melanomas in their early stages:
  - Look for changes in the size, shape, or color of moles or any red patches.
  - Check your entire body, including between your toes and the soles of your feet.
  - Seek prompt treatment for suspicious pigmented lesions.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- There is no such thing as a safe tan. Having a tan is the skin's response to injury from ultraviolet (UV) light.
- 600,000 new cases of skin cancer are reported every year. By the year 2010, more than 1 million new reports of skin cancer could be reported annually, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation.
- 95 percent of all skin cancers in the United States are attributed to exposure to ultraviolet radiation.
- One in 75 people will develop malignant melanoma in their lifetime.
- Skin cancer caught in the early stages has almost a 100 percent cure rate.
- The annual increase in malignant melanomas was about 7 percent per year, the most rapidly increasing rate for any cancer in the United States.

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2. University Extension, University of Missouri-Columbia, Agricultural Engineering Department.

- The National Farm Medicine Center in Marshfield, Wisconsin screened 780 people and found that 24 percent of them had a precancerous condition.
- The Environmental Protection Agency predicts that for every 1 percent depletion of ozone, there will be a 2 to 5 percent increase in squamous cell carcinoma and a 1 to 3 percent increase in basal cell carcinoma.
- Tanning booths are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration and can cause the following problems: skin cancer, damage to the immune system and eyes, first and second degree burns, and premature aging.
- 50 percent of a person's lifetime exposure to ultraviolet radiation occurs by the time they are 18.
- Don't use tanning pills containing canthaxanthin. These pills are NOT approved for use in the United States and they can kill you by killing your white and red blood cells.
- Sun Protection Factor (SPF) is the number that reflects a product's ability to block ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation. It does not indicate an ability to block ultraviolet A (UVA) radiation.
- UVB rays affect the epidermis, the outermost layer of skin. UVA rays penetrate to the dermis and alter skin fibers, remove moisture and elasticity, and can enhance the cancer-causing potential of UVB rays.
- To block UVA rays, look for sunscreens that contain Parsol 1789 (avobenzone).
- SPF 15 means the sunscreen will protect your skin 15 times longer from UVB than if sunscreen was not used. The actual amount of time will vary from person to person, their altitude, and proximity to the equator.
- SPF 15 blocks 95 percent of the UVB wavelengths. SPF 30 is NOT twice as good. It only provides another 3 percent of protection.
- It takes 1 oz. of sunscreen to cover an adult.
- Sunscreen should be applied 20 to 30 minutes before going out in the sun so it has a chance to bond with the skin.
- Consumer Reports says waterproof sunscreen is better than water-resistant sunscreen. It also says less expensive sunscreens are as effective as more expensive sunscreens.