



# SUN SAFETY TIPS



## RISK FACTORS FOR SKIN CANCER

There's no such thing as a "healthy tan." Skin tans because it's been damaged by UV rays, which stimulates the production of more melanin, the pigment that colors the skin. Anyone, including people of color, can develop skin cancer. Nonetheless, some people have genetic and/or lifestyle risk factors that make them more vulnerable than the general population.

These risk factors include:

- Pale or light skin color
- Family history of skin cancer
- A personal history of skin cancer
- Exposure to the sun through work and outdoor leisure activities
- A history of sunburns, especially early in life
- A history of indoor tanning
- Skin that burns, freckles, reddens easily, or becomes painful in the sun
- Blue or green eyes
- Blonde or red hair
- A large number of certain types of moles

## SMART, SIMPLE STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING CANCER.

### UV Radiation and Your Skin

UV radiation is part of the electromagnetic (light) spectrum that reaches the earth in the form of sunlight. Too much UV radiation damages the skin's cellular DNA and causes genetic mutations that can lead to nonmelanoma skin cancers (NMSC), basal cell carcinoma (BCC), squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) as well as melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.

### Protecting Yourself from Sun Damage

UV rays can get through clouds and haze and reflect off of surfaces such as water, cement, sand, or snow. Below are some wise precautions to take if you want to save your skin from sun damage and lower your risk of developing skin cancer:

- **Avoid any type of indoor tanning** like sun lamps and tanning beds
- **Watch the clock** – The hours between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. are the most hazardous for UV exposure outdoors
- **Go under cover** – Wear clothing that covers your arms and legs and a wide-brimmed hat to protect your neck, face and ears. Don't forget the UV-blocking sunglasses
- **Use sunscreen with sun protective factor (SPF) 30** or higher, and both UVA and UVB protection

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## Could It Be Skin Cancer?

Skin cancer develops primarily on areas of the body that get a lot of sun exposure. But it can also form on less sun-exposed areas such as your palms, the soles of your feet and even under your nails.

- **Basal cell carcinoma** usually occurs in sun-exposed areas of the body. It may appear as a pearly or waxy bump or a flat, flesh-colored or brown lesion.
- **Squamous cell carcinoma** usually occurs on sun-exposed areas of your body, such as your face, ears and hands. People with darker skin are more likely to develop squamous cell carcinoma on areas that aren't often exposed to the sun. It may appear as a firm, red nodule or a flat lesion with a crusty surface
- **Melanoma** can develop anywhere on your body, in otherwise normal skin or in an existing mole. Melanoma can occur on skin that hasn't been exposed to the sun and can occur with any skin tone. Signs include:
  - > A large brownish spot with darker spots in it
  - > A mole that bleeds or changes in color, size or shape
  - > A small lesion with an irregular border and different colors such as red, white, blue or blue-black
  - > Dark lesions on the palms, soles, fingertips, toes, or the mucous membranes of the mouth, nose, vagina or anus

## Safe Fun In the Sun for Kids

Outdoor activities are great for family bonding and get-togethers. But it's important to protect your children from the cumulative damage of repeat sunburns. Below are some recommendations from the Academy of Pediatrics:

### BABIES 6 MONTHS AND UNDER

- Avoid sun exposure as much as possible. Dress your infant in lightweight long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and a brimmed hat that shades the neck.
- Apply a zinc-oxide containing sunscreen, if shade and adequate clothing are not available, with at least 30 SPF (sun protection factor) to small areas, such as the infant's face and the back of the hands. If an infant gets sunburn, apply cool compresses to the affected area, however, the damage has been done and prevention is the key.

### ALL OTHER CHILDREN

- Covering up is a kid's best defense. Dress your child in cotton clothing with a tight weave. Protect your child's face with a hat with a forward-facing bill or at least a three-inch brim and get him or her used to wearing sunglasses that provide 97–100% protection against both UVA and UVB rays.
- Have children play in the shade whenever possible, and limit sun exposure during the peak intensity hours between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Slather on the sunscreen. SPF 30 or higher containing zinc-oxide protects against both UVA and UVB rays. Be sure to apply enough sunscreen — about one ounce per child.
- Reapply sunscreen every 90 minutes, or after swimming or sweating.
- Watch out for water, sand and snow. These surfaces reflect UV rays and may result in sunburn more quickly.