

2003 Skin Cancer Fact Sheet

- Nearly half of all new cancers are skin cancers.
- More than 1 million new cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed in the United States this year.*
- About 80 percent of the new skin cancer cases will be basal cell carcinoma, 16 percent are squamous cell carcinoma, and 4 percent are melanoma.
- Both basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma have a better than 95 percent cure rate if detected and treated early.
- An estimated 9,800 people will die of skin cancer this year, 7,600 from melanoma and 2,200 from other skin cancers.*
- There will be about 91,900 new cases of melanoma in 2003 – 37,700 in situ (noninvasive) and 54,200 invasive (29,900 men and 24,300 women).* This is a 4 percent increase in new cases of melanoma from 2002. In 2003, at current rates one in 39 Americans have a lifetime risk of developing melanoma and one in 67 Americans have a lifetime risk of developing invasive melanoma.
- One person dies of melanoma every hour. In 2003, 7,600 deaths will be attributed to melanoma – 4,700 men and 2,900 women.* Older Caucasian males have the highest mortality rates from melanoma.
- The incidence of melanoma more than tripled among Caucasians between 1980 and 2003.
- More than 77 percent of skin cancer deaths are from melanoma.
- Melanoma is more common than any non-skin cancer among women between 25 and 29 years old.
- Melanoma is the fifth most common cancer in men and the seventh most common cancer in women.* **

*Source: American Cancer Society's 2003 Facts & Figures

**Excluding basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma, which together are the most common cancers in both sexes.

How To Perform A Self Evaluation



Examine your body front and back in the mirror, then right and left sides with arms raised.



Bend elbows and look carefully at forearms, upper underarms and palms.



Look at the backs of your legs and feet, the spaces between your toes and on the sole.



Examine the backs of your neck and scalp with a hand mirror. Part hair for a closer look.

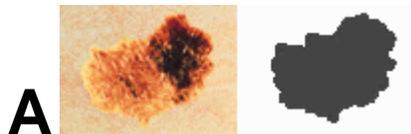


Finally, check your back and buttocks with a hand mirror.

ABCDs of Melanoma Detection

Look for Danger Signs in Pigmented Lesions of the Skin

Consult your dermatologist **immediately** if any of your moles or pigmented spots exhibit:



A
Asymmetry--one half unlike the other half.



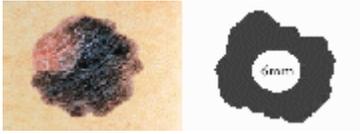
B
Border irregular--scalloped or poorly circumscribed border.

C



Color varied from one area to another; shades of tan and brown; black; sometimes white, red or blue.

D



Diameter larger than 6mm as a rule (diameter of a pencil eraser).

MIND THESE ABCDs
They may be signs of malignant melanoma.

[Locate a Skin Cancer Screening Facility Near You](#)

While it's important to practice sun safety, it's even more important to practice it correctly. Previous studies have shown that sunscreen users do not apply enough sunscreen in a single application to adequately protect the whole body. Consequently, the SPF achieved will be considerably less than that expected and in many cases will be closer to half of that indicated by the product label. One ounce of sunscreen, enough to fill a shot glass, is considered the amount needed to cover the exposed areas of the body completely.

The AAD recommends the following tips for effective sunscreen use:

- Wear a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15.
- Use sunscreens every day if you are going to be in the sun for more than 20 minutes.
- Apply sunscreens to dry skin 15 to 30 minutes before going outdoors.
- When applying sunscreen, pay particular attention to the face, ears, hands and arms, and generously coat the skin that is not covered by clothing.
- Reapply sunscreens every two hours or immediately after swimming or strenuous activity.

Reapplying sunscreen at least every two hours is key to its effective use. Two recent studies support the idea that not only do you have to apply sunscreen correctly, you must reapply it to receive the maximum benefit.

In addition to wearing a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher, and reapplying it every two hours, a comprehensive sun protection program includes avoiding deliberate tanning with indoor or outdoor light, seeking shade, wearing protective clothing and limiting exposure during peak hours," said Dr. Johnson. "These sun safety tips can go a long way towards preventing overexposure to the sun today and help protect against skin cancer in the future.

Tips for Sun Protection

1. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 on all exposed skin, including the lips, even on cloudy days.
2. If exposed to water, either through swimming or sweating, a water-resistant sunscreen should be used.
3. Reapply sunscreen frequently - every 1 1/2 hours, more often if sunny or heavily perspiring.
4. Wear a broad-brimmed hat and sunglasses.
5. Seek shade whenever possible.
6. Wear protective, tightly-woven clothing.
7. Plan outdoor activities early or late in the day to avoid peak sunlight hours between 10 am and 4 pm.

Sunscreens and Sun Blocks

Sunscreens work by absorbing, reflecting, or scattering the sun's rays on the skin. They are available in many forms, including ointments, creams, gels, lotions, sprays, and wax sticks. All are labeled with SPF numbers. The higher the SPF, the greater the protection from sunburn, caused mostly by UVB rays. Some sunscreens, called "broad-spectrum," reflect both UVA and UVB rays. They do a better job of protecting skin from other effects of the sun including photo damage, photo dermatitis, and sun rashes. Sunscreens are not perfect, however. Sun protection should always begin with avoiding peak sun hours and dressing sensibly.

Sunscreens should be applied about a half hour before going outdoors. Even water-resistant sunscreens should be reapplied often, about every 1 1/2 hours or after swimming, towel drying, or perspiring. Sunscreens should be kept out of the eyes and ultraviolet light-blocking sunglasses should be worn. Sunscreens should be applied generously and evenly so as not to miss any areas of sun-exposed skin.

Sunscreens that block UVB rays are composed of a mixture of some or all of the following chemicals: padimate O homosalate, octyl methoxyginnamate, benzophenone, octyl salicylate, phenylbenzimidazole sulfonic acid and octocrylene. Broad-spectrum sunscreens add oxybenzone or avobenzone (Parsol 1789) to block UVA rays. Physical sunscreens/blocks or chemical free sunscreens contain titanium dioxide and/or zinc oxide, which reflect UVB and UVA and can be used by people allergic to chemical sunscreens.

A typical white t-shirt has a SPF of 3. Colorless dyes are available which increase the SPF to 30.

Self Tanning Lotions

Dermatologists are often asked if self-tanners are a safe alternative to the sun. Self-tanning lotions are a safe alternative to the sun. They contain dihydroxyacetone, which interacts with proteins in the skin to produce an orange/tan color that doesn't wash off. When you can see color, the self-tanners have a SPF of 4. This is not enough protection so additional sunscreens should be used.

Additional Information About Sun Protection

The greatest sun damage occurs between 10 am and 4 pm, when the sun's rays are strongest. Even on cloudy days when it doesn't feel hot, or under trees, sunscreen and sun protective measures should be used because sunburn and sun damage to the skin can occur.

Beach umbrellas and other kinds of shade are a good idea, but they do not provide full protection because UV rays can still bounce off sand, water, and porch decks - remember, UV rays are invisible.

Most clothing absorbs or reflects UV rays, but white fabric like loose-knit cotton and wet clothes that cling to your skin do not offer much protection. The tighter the weave, the more sun protection it will offer.

Sun protection is also important in the winter. Snow reflects up to 80% of the sun's rays, causing sunburn and damage to uncovered skin. Winter sports in the mountains increase the risk of sun damage because there is less atmosphere to block the sun's rays.