

Sun Safety

Did you know that just one sunburn in your lifetime can increase your risk for skin cancer?

With summer just around the corner, remembering a few sun safety tips can help us enjoy the summer days while keeping in mind the possible dangers from the sun, such as skin cancer. In fact, skin cancer is the leading type of cancer in the southern United States. However, basal cell, squamous cell, and melanoma can be easily treated if found early. Visit your healthcare provider for yearly skin exams, especially if you are at risk. Risk factors include:

- Lighter natural skin color
- Family history of skin cancer
- Personal history of skin cancer
- Exposure to the sun through work and play
- A history of sunburns early in life
- Skin that burns, freckles, or reddens easily
- Blue or green eyes
- Blond or red hair
- Certain types of moles or a large number of moles.

Self-exams are also recommended. Exam all areas of your skin frequently using the “ABCD” rules for appearance in moles:

- Asymmetrical shape
- Border irregularity
- Color not uniform
- Diameter larger than a pencil eraser

In addition, protect yourself from the sun with these safety tips:

- Wear protective clothing – long sleeve, cotton shirt, a broad brimmed hat and don’t forget UV blocking sunglasses.
- Apply a “broad spectrum” sunscreen of at least SPF 15 liberally to all exposed areas at least 30 minutes prior to sun exposure for best protection. Remember to reapply every 2 hours or after swimming or rigorous activity.
- Stay hydrated while in the sun by drinking 16-32 ounces of water every hour. Avoid alcohol or caffeine as these will increase dehydration.
- Be aware of medications you’re taking and their side effects as related to sun sensitivity. Read your medication labels or consult your pharmacist or health care provider.
- When working outdoors, take breaks in cool, shaded areas. Remember to monitor your friends or co-workers for symptoms of heat-related illness.

Resources:

www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/howto.htm;
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/heatillness.html;
www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/

To speak with an EAP professional, please call: **800.999.1077**

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