

SKIN CANCER: COMMON SIGNS & PREVENTION

Summer's almost here, bringing warmth and relaxation; however, long, light-filled days in the sun often also mean overexposure and increased risk of skin cancer. Considering that skin cancer is the most common type of cancer, early detection is key; this resource will help you to educate your patients on common signs and how to decrease their risk.

01 | Common Signs

In addition to your routine cancer related check-up, you should also check your skin monthly. To perform a thorough self-exam, make sure to be in a well-lit room and utilize both a full-length and handheld mirror. Look for the most common signs of skin cancer which include:

- **Asymmetry:** One part of a mole or birthmark doesn't match the other.
- **Border:** The edges are irregular, ragged, notched, or blurred.
- **Color:** The color is not the same all over and may include shades of brown or black, sometimes with patches of pink, red, white, or blue.
- **Diameter:** The spot is larger than ¼ inch across – about the size of a pencil eraser.
- **Evolving:** The mole is changing in size, shape, or color.

Not all skin cancers look the same, therefore it is imperative that you alert your medical provider if you have any concerns which can also include:

- Any new spots
- Any spot that doesn't look like others on your body
- Any sore that doesn't heal
- Redness or new swelling beyond the border of the mole
- Itching, pain, or tenderness
- Oozing, scaliness, or bleeding

02 | Decrease Your Risk

The best way to lower your risk of skin cancer is to avoid prolonged and intense exposure to the sun.

The following guidelines will help you to decrease your exposure to the sun:

- Avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Seek shade, especially in the middle of the day when the sun's rays are strongest.
- Use protective clothing to guard as much skin as possible when you are out in the sun.
- Use sunscreen and lip balm with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher.
- Cover your head with a wide-brimmed hat, shading your face, ears, and neck.
- Wear sunglasses with 99% to 100% UV absorption to provide optimal protection for the eyes and the surrounding skin.
- Follow these practices to protect your skin even on cloudy or overcast days.
- Avoid other sources of UV light including tanning beds and sun lamps.

For additional resources regarding skin cancer visit www.cancer.org

Did You Know?

An estimated 135,000+ cases of Melanoma will be diagnosed in the US in 2015

References

<http://www.skincancer.org/prevention/sun-protection/clothing/beach-chic-and-sun-smart-your-summer-style>

<http://www.cancer.org/cancer/news/features/how-to-spot-skin-cancer>