

HealthMatters

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Keeping your skin healthy



With skin being the largest organ in the body, make sure you are doing everything that you can to protect your skin and keep it healthy.

Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States. There are three types of skin cancer: basal cell, squamous cell and melanoma. The good news is that skin cancer is highly preventable. In most cases, skin cancer is caused by overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) light, which comes from the sun, tanning beds and sun lamps.

You may have heard sun exposure is useful for maintaining vitamin D levels. Vitamin D can also be obtained with food and supplements. To maintain healthy vitamin D levels and also protect your skin, aim for no more than 15 minutes of mid-day sunlight per day.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020

Signs of Skin Cancer

A visible change in your skin is the most common sign of skin cancer. It could be a new growth, a change in an existing mole or a sore that does not heal. For melanoma specifically, an easy way to remember the warning signs is the ABCDE's of melanoma rule:

- **A: Asymmetrical.** The mole or spot does not have a regular shape.
- **B: Border.** The border of the mole or spot is irregular or jagged.
- **C: Color.** Uneven or irregular color.
- **D: Diameter.** The mole or spot is larger than the size of a pea.
- **E: Evolving.** The mole or spot has changed in the past few weeks.

When you meet with your provider, make sure to mention any unusual moles or changes in your skin and also let your healthcare provider know if you are at an increased risk for skin cancer.

Anyone can get skin cancer, but there are certain characteristics that can increase your risk of getting skin cancer including:

- a lighter natural skin color
- skin that burns, reddens or freckles easily
- blue or green eyes, and blond or red hair
- family history of skin cancer
- personal history of skin cancer
- older age

Smoking is one of the leading causes of premature aging by damaging elastin and collagen, which is what gives skin strength and elasticity. But did you know that smoking can increase your risk of squamous cell skin cancer? One of the best ways to protect your skin is to stop smoking.

Sun Safety | Protecting yourself from harmful UV rays is one of the best ways to prevent skin cancer. It's important to use sun protection all year round, not just during the summer. UV rays are still harmful on cloudy and hazy days as well as during the winter months. On a day with light cloud cover, up to 80% of harmful UV rays can penetrate the clouds and reach the earth's surface.

1. Stay in the shade

Stay in the shade, especially during the midday hours (between 10 am and 4 pm) when the sun's rays are the most harmful.

2. Wear clothing that covers arms and legs

When possible, wear tightly knit fabrics that cover parts of your body that would be in the sun. Regular clothing only offers up to SPF 15 protection, but there is some certified clothing that offers higher UV protection. If you are covering your body with clothing, it is recommended to use other forms of protection, such as sunscreen, as well.

3. Wear a hat

Wearing a wide brimmed hat can provide shade for your face, head, ears and neck.

4. Wear sunglasses

Too much exposure to UV rays can damage your eyes and increase your risk of developing certain diseases such as cataracts and eye cancer. Choose sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays.

5. Use sunscreen

Look for a sunscreen that contains at least an SPF of 30 or higher, has both UVA and UVB protection and is water resistant. Apply sunscreen 15 minutes before you are in the sun, as it takes up to 15 minutes for sunscreen to absorb into the skin and provide protection. Remember to reapply if you are out in the sun for more than two hours or after swimming, sweating or towel drying off.

Want to learn more?

Contact your Health & Wellness Center today to discuss what you can do to keep your skin healthy.

Visit [eversidehealth.com](https://www.eversidehealth.com)
or call member services at **866-808-6005**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (2020).
American Academy of Dermatology, (2020).
United States Environmental Protection Agency, (2004).



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