



SAFETY UNLIMITED, INC.

Weekly Safety Meeting

Skin Cancer Prevention

The sun is essential to all life on Earth; however too much exposure to the sun can be harmful to us. Excessive exposure to ultraviolet light, also called “UV rays,” emitted from the sun can cause many skin conditions, as well as skin cancer.

Over-exposing our skin to the sun’s ultraviolet rays causes skin cancer and skin damage. Outdoor workers have a higher risk of skin cancer, as they can spend many hours outside. Fair skinned people are more at risk. While the exposure risk varies from person to person, it is important to remember that no one is immune to the harmful rays of the sun.

Skin Conditions Caused by Sun Exposure:

There are many effects the sun has on our skin. A little bit of exposure can help us get vitamin D, which is a good thing; most effects from sun exposure are not good, however.

Some skin conditions caused by sun exposure include wrinkles, freckles, discolored skin, benign tumors, and skin cancer.

Types of Skin Cancer:

Skin cancer is the most prevalent form of cancer in the United States. UV light from the sun is the number one cause of skin cancer. Contrary to popular belief, the UV light from tanning beds is just as bad for your skin. There are three types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma. Basal cell and squamous cell cancers are less serious types and make up 95% of all skin cancers. Also referred to as non-melanoma skin cancers, they are highly curable when treated early. Melanoma is made up of abnormal skin pigment cells called “melanocytes,” and is the most serious form of skin cancer, causing 75% of all skin cancer deaths.

Over time, cumulative exposure to the sun causes the basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas. More severe acute episodes of sunburn, especially at younger ages, are more likely to cause melanoma. It is very important to protect your kids from severe sunburn. People who are light-skinned or burn easily are most likely to get melanoma.

Safety Tips to Prevent Skin Cancer:

- The best thing to do is to avoid excessive exposure to the sun and tanning beds altogether.
- Water-resistant sunscreen should always be used on exposed skin (face, neck, arms, and back of hands).

- For maximum protection, outdoor workers should wear sunscreen with an SPF 30+ rating and re-apply every 2 to 3 hours.
- When applying sunscreen, wipe it onto the skin. Do not rub it into the skin.
- The majority of our exposure to the sun in our lifetime occurs during childhood. While it may be too late to worry about whether you had adequate protection when you were a kid, it is not too late to protect your kids or other young family members from being overexposed to the sun.
- Periodically check yourself for irregular moles or markings on your skin. A new lesion on your skin, a new mole, or change in an existing mole may indicate skin cancer.

Summary:

Sunlight has a damaging effect on the skin, and over time, changes may be noted. Some of these changes can be early skin cancers and melanoma. It is important that you regularly examine your skin. This will ensure that early changes are noticed and shown to your doctor.

EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES!!

