



Skin Cancer Testimonials

Outdoor-Based Business

People Like You Get Skin Cancer

My arm was bleeding when I got out of the shower. I had previously felt a patch of dry skin on the back of my upper arm. I would notice it after showering, as I dried off. The patch didn't cause pain but it sometimes produced slight irritation. My doctor examined my arm, took a biopsy, and determined I had a skin cancer called basal cell carcinoma. The cancer was cut out of my arm.

I have had a lot of exposure to sunlight throughout my lifetime. During high school and college I worked as a lifeguard for at least four summers. I also enjoyed hiking and camping. As an adult, I've worked many hours outside related to hauling poles and transformers and installing electrical meters.

During the last five years I have required medical treatment several times to remove pre-cancerous lesions on my upper legs and the back of my hands. To prevent future episodes of skin cancer I am now routinely applying sunblock to my face and hands, wearing a visor or hat, and wearing long sleeves when feasible. I only wish I had started to protect my skin years ago before I developed a large number of age spots.

My advice to others is to take sun safety seriously. Cover up and use sunscreen. Be aware of your skin and see a physician if you notice discoloration or growths.

– Donna Thomas, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, Sacramento

I am an attorney with SMUD. Although most of my time is spent indoors these days, I used to work outdoors both as a lifeguard and a postal worker. Additionally I participated in many outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, cycling, swimming, and tennis, etc. Since I only used sunscreen sporadically, I occasionally developed serious sunburns which eventually transformed into a tan.

Cumulative exposure to the sun's UV rays has taken its toll. During the last five years I've had at least 10 basal cell skin cancer spots and another dozen pre-cancerous blemishes removed. I even had some cancerous tissue removed from my lower eyelid.

These days I make sure I visit my dermatologist at least once a year to catch any skin cancer early. My doctor says the bigger the blemish, the greater amount of skin will have to be removed under the skin's outer surface. Some people wait so long that large patches of skin must be removed.

I wish I had been more careful when I was younger, but then who knew? You have no such excuse nowadays.

– Steve Cohn, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, Sacramento



Cover up!





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"I thought it was just a pimple or ingrown hair on my forearm. I let it grow maybe three to four weeks until I decided to lance it myself. By this time it was about the size of a pencil eraser. It was not like any pimple I had ever had before, kind of fleshy inside. I finally went to the doctor and he told me it was either basal or squamous cell carcinoma (skin cancer). I was lucky the cancer was caught early and surgically removed. I will definitely seek medical advice from now on as soon as I suspect a skin growth.

I have spent most of my working career, 20 to 25 years, in the out-of-doors doing highway maintenance. In addition, I have frequently engaged in summer water sports and motorcycle riding."

– Charles Wheeler, CalTrans, Sacramento

"I've worked for CalTrans for over 30 years. I enjoy outdoor recreation and pursuits like fishing and gardening. About 13 years ago I went for a routine medical appointment and told the doctor there was a sore on my neck that would not heal. My doctor referred me to a dermatologist who diagnosed the spot as skin cancer and had it removed. During the following years I developed a new case of skin cancer at least twelve times! The cancers appeared on my face (nose & cheek), neck, chest, back, and waist.

Over 40 medical appointments were required to treat all the episodes of skin cancer. The treatments included excision, freezing (cryosurgery), and drug injection. All those years of exposure to sunlight also reduced my body's immune response such that cuts and scrapes now heal much slower. Ten years ago a letter from my doctor helped get me an indoor job assignment.

When I'm not at work I try to stay indoors during the middle of the day. I also use sunscreen, wear a hat, and long-sleeved shirts when I'm outside. I believe outdoor workers should practice sun safety both on and off the job."

– Gerry Austin, CalTrans, San Diego



Cover up!

