



# PARENTS!

## Protect Your Children and Yourself From Too Much Sunlight

### Sun Safety Is Important!

Parents, did you know that childhood sunburns can increase your child’s risk of developing skin cancer as an adult? Even a suntan is harmful. Sunburns and tanning hurt the skin and serve as outward signs of internal skin damage.

Sunlight causes 90 percent of all non-melanoma skin cancer. The number of skin cancer cases has dramatically risen, especially in the last three to four decades because:

- Modern clothing exposes more skin
- Diminishing ozone, high in the sky, that partially protects the earth’s surface from receiving UV rays
- Tanning is falsely viewed as healthy
- General aging of the population
- Many people have moved to sunnier states

### Three Major Forms of Skin Cancer

The three major forms of skin cancer are basal cell carcinoma (BCC), squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), and the deadliest form – malignant melanoma. BCC and SCC often appear as a pale, wax-like, pearly bump or a red, scaly, sharply outlined patch. Skin cancer can develop anywhere on the body but most often it appears on surfaces receiving the most sunlight.

**Malignant melanoma** is the most serious type of skin cancer. It often arises from or near a mole. You should see your doctor (especially a dermatologist) if you have a mole or growth that has one or more of these features:

- If divided in half, the two resulting parts would have different shapes
- It has jagged or rough edges
- It has two or more colors (which may be mixed together)
- It is wider than a standard pencil eraser

Melanoma often appears on parts of the body not regularly exposed to sunlight. While light-skinned people have a greater risk of getting melanoma, this disease is increasing among people of color.

In the United States, over one million people are expected to get BCC or SCC this year. An additional \_\_\_\_\_ will develop melanoma. Approximately \_\_\_\_\_ individuals will die from melanoma.

Since sunlight is the major cause of skin cancer, parents should protect children from too much sunshine. That’s because up to 50 percent of a person’s lifetime contact with sunlight occurs during childhood and adolescence. Childhood sun exposure plays a significant role in skin cancer development during adulthood.



Cover up!



Wear UV-protective sunglasses!





### Skin Cancer Risk Factors & Conditions

Any person, regardless of skin color, can get skin cancer. Individuals most likely to get skin cancer will tend to have one or more of these characteristics:

- Fair skin
- Blue, green, or hazel eyes
- Light-colored hair
- Freckles
- A tendency to burn rather than tan
- A history of severe sunburns
- Have many moles (over 50)
- A personal or family history of skin cancer.
- Outdoor worker

UV rays linked to skin cancer development are more intense (destructive) under certain time frames or conditions:

- From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- From mid-spring through mid-fall
- Lack of thick cloud cover
- At higher altitudes

### SUN SAFETY TIPS

Parents are encouraged to model the following behaviors to set a good example for their children. Sun-protective behaviors should be practiced in all outdoor settings, not just at the beach:

- Reduce sun exposure from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., when UV rays are strongest. (This is especially important from mid-spring through mid-fall.)
- Wear sunglasses that include a warranty stating that they provide 99–100 percent UVA and UVB (broad-spectrum) protection.
- Wear tightly-woven, loose-fitting clothing that covers as much of the body as possible.
- Liberally apply sunscreen to exposed skin 15 minutes before going outdoors. The sunscreen container should specify a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or above and should state that it provides broad-spectrum (UVA and UVB) protection. Depending on outdoor conditions, sunscreen should be reapplied at least every two hours.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat (at least 4-inch brim) that produces a shadow that covers the eyes, nose, face, ears, and neck.
- Use lip balm with a SPF of 15 or greater.
- Stay under shade (trees, physical structures), especially from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. **Shade tip:** Parents, at home move play equipment like swing sets and other fixed recreation items in your yard to places protected by shade.
- Avoid tanning salons, booths, and sunlamps.

**CAUTION!** Don't depend on sunscreen alone to protect you from skin cancer. Instead, rely as much as possible on a combination of all the tips listed.

Finally, the good news is that most skin cancer can be successfully treated if detected in its earlier stages. Of course the best "treatment," as always, is **PREVENTION**. Your support and cooperation is vital to help your young ones live sun safe. Protect both yourself and your children from developing skin cancer. Learn more about preventing skin cancer by visiting \_\_\_\_\_



Cover up!

