

FOR YOUR PATIENT

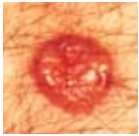
Sunshine, summertime, and a reminder about skin cancers

ALTHOUGH susceptibility to skin cancer occurs at any time of year, summer is when many people intentionally increase their sun exposure and their risk for skin cancer; therefore, this is a good time to review the facts.

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States. Melanoma is diagnosed in more than 68,000 Americans, and an early form of the disease is diagnosed in another 48,000, each year. In addition, more than 2 million people are treated for basal or squamous cell skin cancer each year. Skin cancers are named for the type of cells that become malignant (melanocytes, basal cells, or squamous cells).



Melanoma is a type of skin cancer that begins in melanocytes (pigment cells). Melanoma often occurs on the skin on the head, neck, or between the shoulders and the hips in men, and on the lower legs or between the shoulders and the hips in women; however, melanoma can develop on any skin surface. Melanoma is rare in people with dark skin. It is usually found under the fingernails, under the toenails, on the palms of the hands, or the soles of the feet in people with dark skin.



Basal cell carcinoma usually occurs in places that have been exposed to the sun. Therefore, the face is the most common place to find basal cell skin cancer. In people with fair skin, basal cell carcinoma is the most common type.



Squamous cell carcinoma begins in the squamous cells. It is the most common type of skin cancer in people with dark skin and is usually found in places that are not exposed to the sun, such as the legs or feet; however, in people with fair skin, squamous cell skin cancer usually occurs on parts of the skin that are exposed to the sun, such as the head, face, ears, and neck.

The National Cancer Institute booklet, *What You Need to Know About Melanoma and Other Skin Cancers*, provides information on skin cancer types, treatments, and symptoms.

Source: National Cancer Institute. *What You Need to Know About Melanoma and Other Skin Cancers*. Rockville, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health; 2010.

Lifetime UV exposure in the United States

Age	Average accumulated exposure ^a
1-18 y	22.73%
19-40 y	46.52%
41-59 y	73.7%
60-78 y	100%

^a Based on a 78-year lifespan.
Source: Skin Cancer Facts. Skin Cancer Foundation Web site. <http://www.skincancer.org/Skin-Cancer-Facts/>. Accessed May 23, 2011.

BY THE NUMBERS

1 in 5

Number of Americans who will develop skin cancer

2.8 million

Estimated number of cases of basal cell carcinoma diagnosed annually

<5%

Percentage of skin cancers diagnosed as melanoma

>75%

Percentage of skin cancer deaths caused by melanoma

Source: Skin Cancer Facts. Skin Cancer Foundation Web site. <http://www.skincancer.org/Skin-Cancer-Facts/>. Accessed May 23, 2011.

Preventive measures

- **Stay out of the sun between 10 AM and 4 PM.** Use a sun umbrella or stay in the shade during the height of the day.
- **Avoid getting sunburn.** One sunburn increases your risk of developing melanoma; five sunburns double your lifetime risk.
- **No tan is safe.** A tan is the skin's way of preventing further damage from UV rays.
- **Cover up with protective clothing.** Wear densely woven and dark- or bright-colored clothing, including a wide-brimmed hat and UV-protective sunglasses.
- **Use a sunscreen.** SPF15 or higher is recommended. Reapply the sunscreen when in the sun for long periods.

Source: Skin Cancer Facts. Skin Cancer Foundation Web site. <http://www.skincancer.org/preventing-skin-cancer.html>. Accessed May 23, 2011.