

CHECK YOUR SKIN

***Check It Monthly
Check It for Life***

The *Check Your Skin* campaign is designed to increase early detection of melanoma, the most serious type of skin cancer.

The focus of the public service campaign is to:

- ✓ Increase Awareness of Skin Cancer Risks
- ✓ Encourage Sun Protection
- ✓ Recognize the changes associated with Malignant Melanoma
- ✓ Teach Self Skin Examination Methods

Austintown Rotary Club
August 11, 2008

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RISK FACTOR QUIZ

Exposure to the ultraviolet radiation of the sun is one of the most important facts in determining skin cancer risk. Past sunburns, sun exposure at young ages, genetics, and immune system deficiencies also play a part.

1. _____ Hair Color
Blond/red = 4, brown = 3, black = 1
2. _____ Eye Color
Blue/green = 4, hazel = 3, brown = 2
3. _____ When exposed to *one hour* of summer sun, you...
Burn, and sometimes blister = 4, burn, then tan = 3, tan = 1
4. _____ Where is your job?
Outdoors = 4, mixed = 3, indoors = 2
5. _____ Do you have freckles?
Many = 5, some = 3, none = 1
6. _____ Has anyone in your family had skin cancer?
Yes = 5, no = 1
7. _____ Where in the U.S. did you live most before the age of 18?
South = 4, Midwest = 3, North = 2

Risk Levels

10 - 15	Below average risk
16 - 22	Average risk
23 - 25	High risk
26 - 30	Very high risk

People with the following characteristics have the highest risk for melanoma:

- √ **Fair** complexions that burn or blister easily
- √ **Blond or red hair**
- √ **Blue, green or gray eyes**
- √ **Excessive sun exposure during childhood and teen years**, sunburns before age 18
- √ **Family history** of melanoma
- √ More than **100 moles**; 50 if you are under age 20

1. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the US.

TRUE or FALSE

2. People with darker skin are protected from sun damage and do not get skin cancer.

TRUE or FALSE

PREVENT SKIN CANCER **PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THE SUN**

- ✓ Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (**SPF**) of at least **15**.
- ✓ Reapply sunscreen every **2 hours**, even on cloudy days.
- ✓ Wear protective, tightly woven clothing, such as a long-sleeved shirt and pants. (Coolibar.com)
- ✓ Wear a wide-brimmed **hat** and **sunglasses** when outdoors.
- ✓ Stay in the **shade** whenever possible.
- ✓ Avoid reflective surfaces, which can reflect up to 85 % of the sun's damaging rays.
- ✓ Protect children. Minimize sun exposure and apply sunscreen to children aged 6 months and older.
- ✓ No shadow...seek the **shade!** If your shadow is shorter than you are, you're likely to sunburn.
- ✓ Avoid tanning beds.
- ✓ **The sun's rays are the strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.**

*The **Check Your Skin** project endorses the use of sunscreen to prevent squamous cell carcinoma and basal cell carcinoma. Sunscreen has not been proven to prevent melanoma. Therefore, the only proven protection from the sun's effects on the development on melanoma is to avoid the sun.

3. Skin cancer is part of the normal aging process and it cannot be prevented.

TRUE or FALSE

4. Avoiding the sun will prevent skin cancer.

TRUE or FALSE

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5. Skin cancer grows slowly. Therefore, individuals only older than age 60 need to check their skin.

TRUE or FALSE

6. Melanoma can occur anywhere on the body, including even inside the mouth and on the genitalia.

TRUE or FALSE

7. Hair protects the scalp from the sun and therefore, skin cancer rarely occurs on the head.

TRUE or FALSE

8. Development of a new mole or change in an existing mole may be a sign of skin cancer.

TRUE or FALSE

Asymmetry
One half unlike other



Border
Irregular



Color
More than one color



Diameter
Usually greater than 6mm



Enlargement & Other Changes
CHANGE in size/shape/color



Head
• Scalp & Ears
• Face & Neck

Extrемities
• Arms & Hands
• Legs & Feet

All private areas
• Genitals
• Buttocks

Torso
• Chest & Back
• Abdomen

Q & As ABOUT MELANOMA

Q. What is melanoma?

A. Melanoma, a very serious skin cancer, is characterized by the uncontrolled growth of pigment-producing tanning cells. Melanomas may suddenly appear without warning, but can also develop from or near a mole. They are found most frequently on the upper backs of men and women or on the legs of women, but can occur anywhere on the body.

The overall incidence of melanoma is rising at an alarming rate. In 2005, current rates claim one in 34 Americans had a lifetime risk of developing melanoma.

Q. Is melanoma a serious disease?

A. More than 80 % of skin cancer deaths are from melanoma. Advanced melanoma spreads to internal organs and may result in death. One person each hour dies from melanoma. If detected in the early stages, melanoma can usually be treated successfully.

Q. How many people will develop melanoma this year?

A. An estimated 105,750 *new* cases of melanoma were diagnosed in the United States in 2005, a 10 % increase from 2004.

In addition, 7,770 people are expected to die from the disease – 4,910 men and 2,860 women. Melanoma is the fifth most common cancer in men and the sixth most common cancer in women. * **

Q. What causes melanoma?

A. Excessive exposure to the ultraviolet radiation of the sun is the most important *preventable* cause of melanoma. People in southern regions, where the sunlight is more intense, are more likely to develop melanoma than those in northern regions. Melanoma has also been linked to excessive sun exposure in the first 10 to 18 years of life. Other possible causes include genetic factors and immune system deficiencies.

Q. Who gets melanoma?

A. Melanoma can strike anyone. Caucasians are ten times more likely to be diagnosed with melanoma than other races. However, even among Caucasians, certain individuals are at higher risk than others. For example:

- √ Your chances increase significantly if you've already had one melanoma.
- √ You have a substantially increased risk of developing melanoma if you have many moles, large moles or atypical (unusual) moles.
- √ Your risk is increased if your parents, children or siblings have had melanoma.
- √ If you are a Caucasian with fair skin, your risk is four times as great as a Caucasian with olive skin.

- √ Redheads and blondes have a two-fold to four-fold increased risk of developing melanoma.
- √ Excessive sun exposure in the first 10 to 18 years of life increases your chances of developing melanoma.

Q. What are atypical moles?

A. Most people have moles (also known as nevi). Atypical moles are unusual moles that are generally larger than normal moles, variable in color, often have irregular borders and may occur in far greater number than regular moles. Atypical moles occur most often on the back and also commonly occur on the chest, abdomen and legs in women. It is important to recognize that atypical moles are not limited to any specific body area -- they may occur anywhere. The presence of multiple atypical moles may mark a greater risk of melanoma developing either in a mole or on apparently normal skin.

Q. What does melanoma look like?

A. Recognition of changes in the skin is the best way to detect early melanoma. Melanoma generally begins as a mottled, light brown to black flat blemish with irregular borders. The blemish is usually at least one-quarter inch in size. It may turn shades of red, blue or white, crust on the surface and bleed. They most frequently appear on the upper back, torso, lower legs, head and neck. A changing mole, a new mole, or a mole that is different or "ugly" or begins to grow requires prompt medical attention.

If you notice a mole on your skin, you should follow the simple ABCD rule which outlines the warning signs of melanoma:

- √ **Asymmetry** – One half does not match the other half.
- √ **Border irregularity** – edges of the mole are ragged or notched
- √ **Color** – multiple colors may be present (brown, black, pink, red and/or blue)
- √ **Diameter** – increasing over time
- √ **Enlargement and other changes** – any change in a moles such as bleeding, continued itching, crusting and or draining

The American Academy of Dermatology urges everyone to examine his or her skin regularly. This means looking over your entire body including your back, your scalp, the soles of your feet, between your toes and the palms of your hands.

If there are any changes in the size, color, shape or texture of a mole, the development of a new mole, or any other unusual changes in the skin, see your dermatologist/physician immediately.

Q. Can melanoma be cured?

A. When detected in its earliest stages, melanoma is highly curable. The average five-year survival rate for individuals with melanoma is 92 %, a 4% increase from 2001. For localized melanoma, melanoma that has not spread beyond the outer layers of the skin at the time of detection, the average five-year survival rate is 98 %. Approximately 83 % of melanomas are diagnosed at a localized stage.*

When detected early, surgical removal of thin melanomas can cure the disease in most cases. Early detection is *essential*; there is a direct correlation between the thickness of the melanoma and survival rate. Dermatologists recommend a regular self-examination of the skin to detect changes in its appearance. Additionally, patients with risk factors should have a complete skin examination by a dermatologist annually. Anyone with a changing or new mole or blemish should be examined immediately.

Q. Can melanoma be prevented?

A. Because overexposure to ultraviolet light is thought to be a primary cause of many melanomas, dermatologists recommend the following precautions:

- √ Avoid “peak” sunlight hours -- 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. -- when the sun’s rays are the strongest.
- √ Seek shade whenever possible. Remember “*No shadow...seek the shade!*” If your shadow is shorter than you are, the damaging rays of the sun are at their strongest and you’re likely to sunburn.
- √ Apply a broad spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 15 or higher, apply 15 - 30 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every two hours, especially when playing, gardening, swimming or doing any other outdoor activities. Sunscreens should not be used to increase the time spent in intense sunlight or instead of protective clothing.
- √ Wear protective clothing, including a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses and long-sleeved shirt and pants during prolonged periods of sun exposure.

*Source: American Cancer Society’s 2007 Facts & Figures

** Excluding basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma, which together are the most common cancers in both sexes.