

Prevention Guidelines

Sun screen alone is not enough. The below is a list of guidelines on how you can keep safe and lower your risk of getting skin cancer:

- **Seek the shade**, especially between 10 AM and 4 PM.
- Do not burn.
- **Avoid** tanning and UV tanning beds.
- **Cover up** with clothing, including a broad-brimmed hat and UV-blocking sunglasses.
- Use a broad spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen with an **SPF of 15 or higher** every day. For extended outdoor activity, use a water-resistant, broad spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen with an **SPF of 30 or higher**.
- Apply 1 ounce (2 tablespoons) of sunscreen to your entire body 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply every two hours or immediately after swimming or excessive sweating.
- **Keep newborns out of the sun.** Sunscreens should be used on babies over the age of six months.
- Examine your skin **head-to-toe** every month.
- See your physician **every year** for a professional skin exam.



WARNING SIGNS FOR SKIN CANCER (ABCDE)*

- A ASYMMETRY** A-symmetry - a mark with one half unlike the other (not symmetrical). Common moles are round and symmetrical
- B BORDER** Border irregularities - scalloped/ poorly defined edges. Common moles are smooth and have even borders
- C COLOR** Colour changes - tan, black, brown, red, white, blue. Common moles are usually a single shade of brown or black
- D DIAMETER** Diameter - larger than 6mm
- E EVOLVING** Evolve - grows bigger and becomes more prominent

Skin Cancer myths:

- The sun is only dangerous in summer or on a hot day
- Sunscreen will protect me completely from the harmful effects of the sun's rays
- One or two cases of sunburn won't result in skin cancer
- People with darker skins are not at risk for getting skin cancer
- Sunbeds are a safer alternate to obtain a tan

Check the facts...

<http://www.gov.za/skin-cancer-awareness-month-sunsmart-201415>
<http://www.cansa.org.za/be-sunsmart/>
http://www.medicinenet.com/image-collection/squamous_cell_carcinoma_1_picture/picture.htm
<http://www.cansa.org.za/be-sunsmart/>
<http://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-information/skin-cancer-facts/myths-vs-facts>

*"The indignity of having to wear suntan lotion pales in comparison to getting skin cancer."
- Jarod Kintz*

This month we focus on:

Skin Cancer



Note from the
doctor

According to leading dermatologists South Africa has taken over from Australia as the no 1 country for skin cancer. Not a good accolade to have. Skin cancer can be devastating and unfortunately a lot of the times only presents when one is a lot older. So the rule is protect your skin and those of your children even when you think the sun is not hot enough to cause damage. Wear protection when at school in the form of sun block and a hat. Apply sun block regularly when swimming and playing sport and avoid sun exposure at midday. Prevention here is definitely better than cure.

Dr. RB Malkin



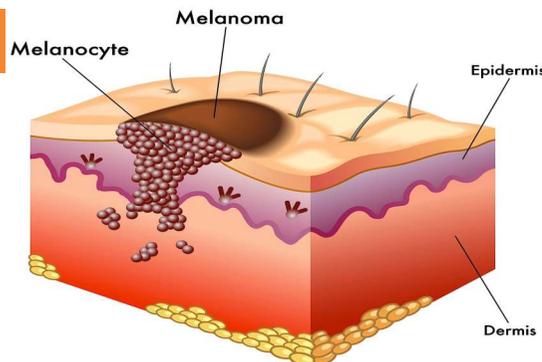
CANSA reminds all South Africans to be Sunsmart. South Africa, with all its sunshine, has a very high rate of skin cancer. Most skin cancers are treatable and also highly preventable!

SUNSMART SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Sunsmart Skin Cancer Awareness month extends from 1 December to 31 January and because South Africa has the second highest rate of cancer in the world, after Australia, it is important for us to know the causes of skin cancers and the prevention methods thereof.

What is skin Cancer?

Skin cancer is a common, usually low-grade cancerous (malignant/ invasive) growth of the skin. It starts from cells that begin as normal skin cells and transform into those with the possibility to increase in an out-of-control manner. Unlike other cancers that have a high potential to spread to other parts of the body, the majority of skin cancers have little to no potential to spread to other parts of the body and threaten your life.



2 MAJOR types of skin cancer:

There are two major types of skin cancers:

- Basal cell carcinoma (the most common type) - This type presents as a sore that seems to get better and then comes back and may start to bleed. It often occurs on the face and neck, where the skin is exposed to sunlight. These tumors are locally invasive and tend to burrow in but not metastasize to distant locations.
- Squamous cell carcinoma (the second most common type) - Cancer that begins in squamous cells. These are thin, flat cells that have the appearance of fish scales under a microscope. Squamous cells are found in the tissue that forms the surface of the skin, the lining of hollow organs of the body and the passages of the respiratory and digestive tracts. Squamous cell carcinomas Cancer may arise in any of these tissues.

Melanoma is also a form of skin cancer but is far less common, though more dangerous, than the other two varieties

How does one get skin cancer?

Most skin cancers are caused by exposure to sun light. This may be due to long term exposure or short periods of harsh exposure and burns. A lot of the damage to DNA in skin cells is from ultraviolet (UV) radiation found in sunlight and in the lights used in tanning beds. Skin cancers however have developed in people who have not been intensely exposed to the sun, which means that other factors may contribute to your risk of skin cancer, such as being exposed to toxic substances or having a condition that weakens the immune system (e.g.: HIV/AIDS).

Who is most at risk?

While everyone can get skin cancer, there are several factors that put people at a higher risk of getting skin cancer. These factors include:

1. *How much time you spend outdoors*
2. *Your natural skin colour*
3. *Your use of sun beds (artificial UV radiation)*

1. *How much time you spend outdoors*

A history of sunburn or intense exposure to sunlight increases the risk of basal cell carcinoma (BCC). Risk is especially high if you had several episodes of sunburn in childhood. This has also been to SCC in some studies. The risk of SCC is mainly linked to overall sun exposure through your life. This is also linked with BCC but to a lesser degree. This means that outdoor workers such as farm workers, gardeners and building site workers have an increased risk of non-melanoma skin cancer.

2. *Your natural skin colour*

Fair skinned people with light coloured hair and eyes, or those more likely to burn than tan, are more at risk of skin cancer. This is because their skin makes less of the protective pigment called melanin.

People with black skin are less likely to get skin cancer, but they can be at risk particularly in areas not exposed to the sun, such as the soles of the feet and palms of the hands.

Albinism is an inherited genetic condition in which the skin makes no melanin at all. Albino people have very white skin and pale blonde hair. They are at higher than average risk of skin cancer because their skin has no natural protection against the sun.

3. *Your use of sun beds (artificial UV radiation)*

Try to avoid making use of sunbeds to tan. Sunbeds give out harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays that damage your skin and can make it look wrinkled, older or leathery. The UV rays from sunbeds can also damage the DNA in your skin cells, and over time this damage can build up to cause skin cancer.

Sunbeds can sometimes be marketed as a 'controlled way' of getting a 'safer tan'. But actually, sunbeds are no safer than exposure to the sun itself, and the amount of UV people receive varies enormously too.

There is sufficient evidence to show that using sunbeds causes malignant melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer. Sunbeds also provide no positive health benefits and using a sunbed before you go on holiday doesn't protect against further damage from the sun while you're away!