

SUN SAFETY: SKIN CANCER PREVENTION



Alabama Department of Public Health
Comprehensive Cancer Control Program
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Alabama Comprehensive Cancer Control Program

- **Purpose** – To support cancer coalition efforts that leverage resources to plan and implement evidence-based strategies to prevent and control cancer thereby reducing cancer incidence, morbidity, and mortality in Alabama through prevention, early detection, and surveillance.
- Program is housed in the Alabama Department of Public Health, Cancer Prevention & Control Division, RSA Tower, 201 Monroe Street, Suite 1350, Montgomery, AL.
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SKIN CANCER STATISTICS



1 IN 5 AMERICANS
WILL BE DIAGNOSED WITH SKIN CANCER
IN THEIR LIFETIME.

- Current estimates are that **one in five Americans** will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.
- Skin cancer is the **most common** form of cancer in the United States, but it is also the **most preventable**.
- Melanoma is the third most common skin cancer, but the **most deadly**.
- Melanoma accounts for only **1%** of skin cancers but causes a large majority of skin cancer deaths.
- In **2019**, it is estimated that **1,420 new cases** of melanoma will be diagnosed in Alabama.

SKIN CANCER RISK FACTORS

- **Risk factor** – Any attribute, characteristic, or exposure of an individual that increases the likelihood of developing a disease or injury. *(World Health Organization)*

SKIN CANCER RISK FACTORS:

 Family history	 Prolonged sun exposure
 Skin that freckles and burns easily	 History of sunburn (childhood or any age)
 Red or blonde hair	 Indoor tanning habit
 Blue or green eyes	 Certain types of moles

IMPORTANT FACTS

- **Chronic sun exposure** is the **leading cause of skin cancer**. Exposure to UVA and UVB radiation from the sun, tanning beds, or sun lamps is the major cause of all three types of skin cancer – melanoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and basal cell carcinoma.
- The risk of melanoma increases as people age. The **average age** of people when diagnosed is **65**.
- Melanoma is not uncommon even among those younger than 30. In fact, it is one of the **most common cancers in young adults** (especially young women).
- Sun damage builds up over time, therefore **early detection** of skin cancer is important and can save your life. Carefully examine all of your skin once a month. Talk to a doctor if you notice changes in your skin appearance such as new or changing spots.
- Using sunscreen regularly is one of the easiest ways to prevent millions of cases of skin cancer each year.
- Research showed that just **14% of American men and 30% of American women** regularly put sunscreen on their faces and other exposed skin before heading outside for more than an hour.

(Sources: CDC and American Cancer Society)

IMPORTANT FACTS

- Approximately 80% of all information we take in is received through the sense of sight. We know the sun can damage our skin, but **most are unaware that our eyes are susceptible to just as much damage**.
- Extended exposure to UV rays has been **linked to chronic eye diseases** including cataract, growths on the eye, corneal sunburn, and eyelid cancer.
- It can take years before you experience any of the sun's damaging effects on your eyes; however, if your eyes feel tired, sore and gritty after a day at the beach, skiing or boating, you may have experienced UV radiation exposure.
- Protect your eyes with a combination of quality sunglasses, UV-blocking contact lenses and a wide-brimmed hat.
- **Everyone is at risk, especially children**. Children typically spend more time in the sun than adults, putting them at risk for developing serious vision and skin damage later in life without regular UV protection.

PREVENTION

All it takes is a **smart sun exposure strategy** combining sunscreen, shade, and protective clothing to greatly reduce your chances of developing skin cancer.

Everyday Steps to Sun Safety:

- Generously apply water-resistant sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher, even on cloudy days. Reapply every 2 hours and after swimming or sweating.
- Wear protective clothing, a wide-brim hat and 100% UVA/UVB blocking sunglasses to protect skin, face, head, ears, neck and eyes.
- Seek shade, especially during the peak time of 10 am – 4 pm when the sun's rays are the strongest.
- Protect children under 6 months old by avoiding sun exposure completely.
- Use extra caution near water, sand and snow – UV reflective surfaces increase risk of sunburn.
- Get Vitamin D safely through a healthy diet or vitamin supplement. Speak with your doctor.
- Avoid tanning beds and sun lamps – cause major skin damage and wrinkles.

EARLY DETECTION

KNOW YOUR ABCDE'S

A	B	C	D	E
ASYMMETRY	BORDER	COLOR	DIAMETER	EVOLUTION
ONE HALF DOES NOT MATCH	UNEVEN BORDERS	VARIETY OF COLORS	LARGER THAN A PENCIL ERASER (1/4")	CHANGE IN SIZE, SHAPE, COLOR, ETC.

SKIN CANCER IN PEOPLE OF COLOR

S Sore
C Changing
A Abnormal
N New

- All people are at risk for skin cancer, even if you never sunburn.
- When skin cancer develops in people of color, it's often in a late stage when diagnosed.
- Late stage diagnosis can be deadly when the person has melanoma. This type of skin cancer can spread quickly.
- If found early, most skin cancers, including melanoma, can be cured.

CHECK YOUR OWN SKIN FOR CHANGES AND PRACTICE SUN SAFETY

ALABAMA LAW

Alabama law allows school students, both public and private, to apply sunscreen at school without the need for special permission from a doctor or parent.

Contact Carol Garrett at carol.garrett@adph.state.al.us to request sunscreen for your students.

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS

What's Your Sun Safety IQ?

- Skin cancer can almost always be cured if it's found early.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- Skin cancer is by far the most common type of cancer in the US.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- Skin cancer is not something young people have to worry about.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- People with dark skin don't need to worry about skin cancer.
 - A. True
 - B. False

What's Your Sun Safety IQ?

- Skin cancer can almost always be cured if it's found early.
 - A. True

The most common types of skin cancer, basal cell cancers, squamous cell cancers, and melanoma, can almost always be cured in the early stages – when they're small and have not spread.

- Skin cancer is by far the most common type of cancer in the US.
 - A. True

According to one estimate, about 5.4 million cases of skin cancer are diagnosed among 3.3 million people each year. (Many people are diagnosed with more than one spot of skin cancer at the same time.)

- Skin cancer is not something young people have to worry about.
 - B. False

The risk of skin cancer does go up with age, but these cancers are seen in younger people, too. In fact, melanoma is one of the most common cancers in young adults – especially young women.

- People with dark skin don't need to worry about skin cancer.
 - B. False

Everyone's skin and eyes can be affected by the sun and other forms of UV rays. People with light skin are much more likely to have sun damage, but darker-skinned people, of any ethnicity, can be affected, too.

What's Your Sun Safety IQ?

- I can't get skin cancer, because my normal routine such as driving to work doesn't include a lot of time outdoors.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- I should use sunscreen at football games, even though I only go (and get burned) once or twice a year.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- If I'm wearing sunscreen, I can stay in the sun as long as I want.
 - A. True
 - B. False
- A sunscreen labeled SPF 15 blocks more UV radiation than one labeled SPF 30.
 - A. True
 - B. False

What's Your Sun Safety IQ?

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 - B. False

Brief sun exposures all year round can add up to major skin damage. Some UV rays can pass through windows, so driving or even sitting by a window during peak sun hours, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., can expose skin to damaging UV rays.

- I should use sunscreen at football games, even though I only go (and get burned) once or twice a year.
 - A. True

Many people think it's OK to get a sunburn now and then, but studies show that even occasional exposure to strong sunlight seems to increase the risk of the most deadly type of skin cancer, melanoma.

- If I'm wearing sunscreen, I can stay in the sun as long as I want.
 - B. False

It is not smart to stay in the sun for several hours, even when wearing sunscreen. The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends to seek shade, limit time in the sun at midday, cover up with a shirt, wear a wide-brimmed hat, use a broad-spectrum sunscreen rated SPF 30 or higher, and reapply sunscreen about every 2 hours.

- A sunscreen labeled SPF 15 blocks more UV radiation than one labeled SPF 30.
 - B. False

SPF 15 sunscreens filter out about 93% of UVB rays, while SPF 30 sunscreens filter out about 97%. Be sure to choose a broad spectrum product that blocks both UVB and UVA light.

What's Your Sun Safety IQ?

- A smart sun exposure strategy includes:
 - A. sunscreen
 - B. shade
 - C. protective clothing
 - D. all of the above
- You applied sunscreen at 12:00 noon for an afternoon of reading beside the pool. At 2:00 p.m., which one of the following actions would best protect your skin?
 - A. slip on some loosely woven cotton clothes
 - B. move to the shade
 - C. reapply sunscreen
- I should wear sunscreen even on cloudy days.
 - A. True
 - B. False

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 - A. slip on some loosely woven cotton clothes
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While all 3 actions may help, getting out of the midday sun when the sun tends to be the hottest is the best choice in this situation. Clothes made of cotton block very little UV radiation – SPF 4. Sunscreen is important to protect skin, but should not be used to extend time in intense sunlight.

- I should wear sunscreen even on cloudy days.
 - A. True

UV rays can pass through clouds causing sunburns and skin damage in as little as 15 minutes.

What's Your Sun Safety IQ?

- Which of the following is *not* a skin cancer risk factor?
 - A. family history
 - B. hair color
 - C. eye color
 - D. skin color
- How often should you check for changes in skin appearance for early detection of skin cancer?
 - A. once a month
 - B. once a year
 - C. never
- Using sunscreen regularly is one of the easiest ways to prevent millions of cases of skin cancer each year.
 - A. True
 - B. False

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 - C. never
- Using sunscreen regularly is one of the easiest ways to prevent millions of cases of skin cancer each year.
 - A. True

What's Your Sun Safety IQ?

- Normal
 - Score
 - 0 - 7
- Exceptional
 - Score
 - 8 - 14