

SKIN CANCER



RISK FACTORS FOR SKIN CANCER

There are risk factors we can control and those we cannot. However,

- Unprotected and/or excessive exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation
- Pale skin (easily sunburned, lots of freckles and/or natural red or blond hair)
- Previous skin cancer
- Family history of skin cancer, especially melanoma
- Lots of moles, irregular moles, or large moles
- Live or vacation at high altitudes (the strength of UV rays increases the higher up you are) or in tropical or subtropical climates
- Spend a lot of time outdoors
- Several severe sunburns in past

The most common cancer in the world is also the most preventable.

Skin cancer is by far the most common type of cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, more than 3.5 million skin cancers are diagnosed each year in the United States – more than all other cancers combined – and the number is going up. This year, an estimated 76,690 people will be diagnosed with melanoma, the most dangerous type of skin cancer, and over 9,000 will die of the disease. May is Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention month, so it's a good time to get people informed and proactive about skin cancer prevention strategies.

The good news? We can prevent the majority of skin cancers from ever

developing through lifestyle. And when skin cancer does develop, it can be detected pretty easily because we can easily see our skin. For most skin cancers, early detection is the key to successful treatment.

WHAT CAUSES SKIN CANCER?

Most skin cancers are caused by too much exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays. Most of this exposure comes from the sun, but it can also come from man-made sources, such as indoor tanning beds and sun lamps.

Skin cancers begin when UV damage affects the DNA of genes that control skin cell growth. Both UVA and UVB rays damage skin and contribute to skin cancer.

IT'S PROBABLY NOT SKIN CANCER

Most skin tumors are cosmetic and not at all worrisome, they include:

- **Most moles**
- **Warts – virus caused growths**
- **Lipomas – soft, fatty lumps under skin**
- **Hemangiomas – also called strawberry or port wine stains**
- **Seborrheic keratosis – tan, brown, or black waxy raised spots**



Is there such a thing as a safe tan?

Skin tans when it absorbs UV radiation, causing an increase in the production of melanin. UV exposure can come from the sun, tanning beds, or sun lamps and all raise the cancer risk whether the skin burns or tans. The only safe “tan” is one from a sunless tanning lotion, which can provide a darker look without the danger of UV exposure.

TYPES OF SKIN CANCER

Basal Cell Skin Cancers

Basal cell carcinoma is the most common type of skin cancer (accounting for 8 in 10) and the most common type of cancer in humans. These cancers are most often found in areas consistently exposed to the sun, such as the head, neck, and arms. They are a common but very treatable form of skin cancer because they are slow growing and rarely spread to other parts of the body when treated.

Squamous Cell Skin Cancers

About 2 out of 10 skin cancers are squamous cell carcinomas. These cancers commonly

appear on sun-exposed areas of the body such as the face, ears, neck, lips, and backs of the hands. They can also develop in scars or chronic skin sores. Squamous cell carcinomas tend to grow and spread more than basal cell cancers, are more likely to invade fatty tissues just beneath the skin, and are more likely to spread.

Melanoma Skin Cancer

Cancers that develop from the pigment-making cells of the skin are called melanomas. Melanoma tumors are usually brown or black, but some can appear pink, tan, or even white. They can occur anywhere on the skin, but are more likely to start on the chest or back of men and the legs of women.

Melanoma is much less common than basal cell and squamous cell skin cancers, but is more dangerous and likely to spread.

Article Sources:

<http://www.cancer.org/cancer/skincancer>

http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/prevention.htm

<http://preventcancer.org/prevention/preventable-cancers/skin-cancer/>

A TOOL TO SHARE WITH YOUR PATIENTS.

Skin Cancer is nearly 100% Preventable

Sun exposure adds up day after day, and it happens every time we are in the sun. When skin is protected from UV rays, you can nearly eliminate skin cancer risk.

Tips to Prevent Skin Damage

- Seek shade, especially when UV rays are strongest from 10am-4pm.
- Wear clothing to protect exposed skin.
- Wear a hat with a wide brim to shade the face, head, ears, and neck.
- Wear sunglasses that wrap around and block as close to 100% of both UVA and UVB rays as possible.

- Use sunscreen with sun protective factor (SPF) 15 or higher, and both UVA and UVB protection, see note below.
- Avoid indoor tanning.

What's in number? – SPF 15 vs SPF 100

There is not as big a difference as you'd think between the various levels of SPF. SPF 15 sunscreens filter out about 93% of UVB rays, while SPF 30 filters out about 97%, SPF 50 about 98%, and SPF 100 about 99%. The higher you go, the smaller the difference becomes. No sunscreen protects you completely. Regardless of the SPF, sunscreen should be reapplied at least every two hours and more if you are swimming or sweating.

Source: <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/skincancer>



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Sierra Nevada Cancer Center Locations

Carson City
1460 S Curry Street, Suite 100
Carson City, Nevada 89703

Fallon
1020 New River Parkway
Fallon, Nevada 89406

Gardnerville
1107 Hwy 395
Gardnerville, Nevada 89410

Sparks
2345 E. Prater Way, Suite 102
Sparks, Nevada 89434

Opening this summer:

South Lake Tahoe
1154 Emerald Bay Road
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150