



## Summer Skin Safety

Summer is a time for fun in the sun, but don't forget to take care of your skin! Sun exposure is the number one cause of skin cancer and causes most of the wrinkles and discoloration on our faces. Freckles, yellow discoloration and the small blood vessels in your skin can be made visible under the sun. Nothing can ever completely erase the damage the sun can do to your skin, so prevention, as usual, is your best bet for healthy skin.

The best way to prevent sun damage is to apply sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher 30 minutes before sun exposure and to reapply every few hours, especially if you are doing water activities. Consumer Reports named their top 4 sunscreens this season! Their picks: Up & Up Sport Continuous SPF 30, by Target, Walgreens Sport Continuous SPF 50, Banana Boat Sport Performance Continuous SPF 30 and Aveeno Continuous Protection SPF 50.

Peak UV hours are from 10am to 3pm, so try to minimize your direct sun exposure during those hours. Ladies, make make-up with SPF your new best friend. Choose sunglasses with total UV protection to protect your eyes, and ask for contact lenses with UV protection. Did you know that 80% of a person's lifetime sun exposure occurs before age 18? Parents, be a good role model and apply sunscreen and please avoid tanning beds at all costs! Make sure your kids are lathering up with SPF before playing outdoors.

Skin cancer comes in many forms, so it is important to check the moles on your skin regularly. When it comes to monitoring moles, know your ABCDE's:

- A stands for asymmetry. Draw an imaginary line down the middle of your mole and compare the halves.
- B is for border. Ragged, blurred or irregular borders are often a sign of a cancerous mole.
- C equals color. Suspicious moles may have different combinations of colors, such as shades of red, brown, tan, blue, white or black.
- D is for diameter. Be wary of moles larger than the size of a pencil eraser.
- E is for elevation. If a portion of your mole is elevated, call your doctor to have it evaluated. A mole that itches, bleeds or is quickly changing should be evaluated as well.

Common locations for melanoma are the back and the backs of your legs. Those who are at the greatest risk for skin cancer meet the following criteria: fair skin or light colored eyes, a family history of skin cancer, a history of excessive sun exposure and blistering sunburns, an abundance of large or irregularly shaped moles, or have received radiation treatments. If you meet any of these criteria, it may be in your best interest to consult with a dermatologist annually.

