



SUN SAFETY FACT SHEET

Skin Cancer Overview

Sun Safety Is Important!

California is a Sun Belt state that for outdoor workers and others presents a high-risk environment for developing skin cancer (including melanoma). In 2010, it is expected that there will be 5,475 new cases of melanoma diagnosed and 855 attributable deaths. Incidence rates of melanoma of the skin have increased in the past 16 years for all racial/ethnic groups, with a significant increase for Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites.

Skin Cancer Rates are Rising

The number of people who get skin cancer has greatly increased during the past 30 years for these and other reasons:

- Modern clothing exposes more skin
- Diminishing ozone, high in the sky, that partially protects the earth's surface from receiving ultraviolet rays
- Tanning is falsely viewed as healthy
- General aging of the population
- Many people have moved to sunnier states

Three Major Skin Cancers

Cancer is a class of diseases in which abnormal cells divide without control and are able to invade other tissues.

There are actually more than 200 types of cancer that may appear in the skin. The three major forms of skin cancer are basal cell carcinoma (BCC), squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), and melanoma – the deadliest form.

Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC) is the most common type of skin cancer; it occurs most frequently on the head and neck, with the rest mainly on the trunk and lower limbs, and often appears as a fleshy bump, nodule, or red patch. BCCs are frequently found in fair-skinned people and rarely occur in dark-skinned individuals. Basal Cell Carcinoma usually do not grow quickly, but this does not mean treatment should be delayed. While BCC rarely metastasize (spread) to other organs, if untreated, the cancer often will begin to repeatedly bleed and crust over, and can extend below the skin to the bone and nerves causing considerable local damage.

Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC) is the second most common skin cancer; it is primarily found in fair-skinned people and rarely in dark-skinned individuals. Typically located on the rim of the ear, face, near the mouth or on the trunk, this cancer may appear as a firm bump, or as a red, scaly patch. Squamous Cell Carcinoma can develop into large masses and grow aggressively, leading to extensive local tissue destruction and possible risk of metastasis. Therefore, it is important to get early treatment.



Cover up!



Skin Cancer Overview continued

Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer. However, if it is recognized and treated early, it is nearly 100 percent curable. However, if it is not, the cancer can advance and spread to other parts of the body, where it becomes hard to treat and can be fatal. While it is not the most common of the skin cancers, it causes the most deaths. Approximately 50,000 new cases of melanoma are diagnosed in the United States every year. It often arises from or near a mole. An individual should see his or her doctor (especially a dermatologist) if a mole or growth appears to have one or more of the following features:

- Divided in half, the two resulting parts would have different shapes
- Jagged or rough edges
- Two or more colors (which may be mixed together)
- Wider than a standard pencil eraser

Melanoma often appears on parts of the body not regularly exposed to sunlight. While light-skinned people have a greater risk of getting melanoma, this disease is increasing among people of color. Melanoma often results in death if it moves into internal organs such as the lungs, liver, or brain.



Cover up!

