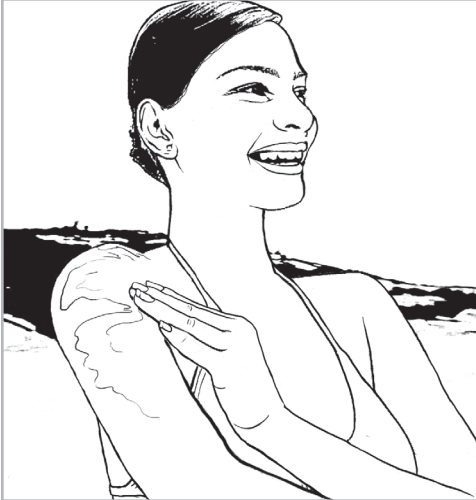


# Skin Cancer Prevention



**You get skin cancer when something is wrong with your skin cells—especially skin that has been exposed to the ultraviolet (UV) rays of the sun.** Healthy skin cells grow as your body needs them and die when they get old. When you have skin cancer, abnormal cells grow in place of healthy cells and don't die when they should.

Skin cancer can look like a bump or swollen area of skin. Skin cancer can also make a mole bleed or change in color or size.

You can prevent skin cancer by limiting the amount of time you spend in the sun and using protective clothing and lotions when you do. Regular skin cancer screenings can also help find cancer early so it can be treated.

## Risk Factors

Your chances of developing skin cancer increase if you have:

- **Fair skin**—Less pigment, or melanin, in your skin gives you less protection from UV rays. If you have blond or red hair, light-colored eyes or freckles, you burn more easily in the sun.
- **Spent a lot of time in the sun**—A suntan is how your body responds to getting too much sun. Having a tan means your skin has been damaged from the sun.
- **A family or personal history of skin cancer**—If you or someone in your family has had skin cancer, this increases your chances of developing it.

## Sunscreen

All sunscreens have a sun protection factor (SPF) to tell you what percentage of the sun's rays are being blocked. There are two kinds of UV rays. UVA rays penetrate deeper into your skin and cause wrinkles and aging skin. UVB rays affect your top layers of skin and cause sunburn. Both kinds of UV rays increase your risk of skin cancer.

Choose a broad spectrum sunscreen that protects against both UVA and UVB rays, and has an SPF of at least 30. And use sunscreen even on cloudy days—up to 40 percent of UV rays can still reach the Earth on a cloud-covered day.

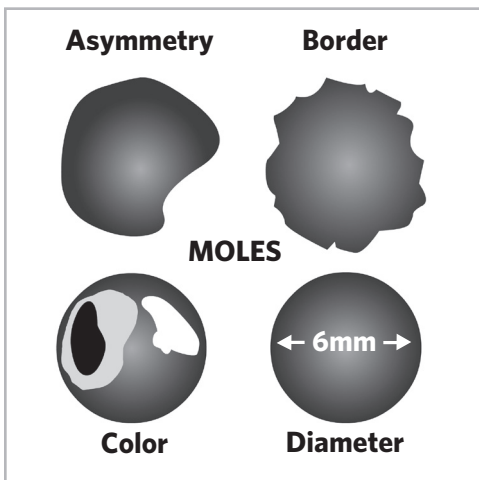
You have to use sunscreen correctly to get its benefits. Follow these tips to stay protected from the sun:

- **Apply 30 minutes before you go out in the sun.**
- **Reapply every two hours, and after swimming, toweling off or sweating**—even if you use waterproof sunscreen.
- **Apply sunscreen liberally.** Use 1 oz., or 2 tablespoons. This is about the amount that would fill a shot glass.

To be safe, always throw out last year's bottle and start each season with new sunscreen. Old sunscreen might not give you full protection.

## What to Look For

Learn how your skin looks normally so you can spot changes. Using a mirror to see your back, do regular skin self-exams to check for any changes, including moles, freckles and birthmarks. And check all of your skin—even skin that doesn't get exposed to the sun, like the bottoms of your feet and in between your toes. If you see something that looks out of the ordinary, make an appointment to show your doctor.



Follow the ABCDE guide to help spot the usual signs of some skin cancers:

**Asymmetry:** One half of the spot doesn't match the other.

**Border:** The edges aren't regular. They are jagged or blurry.

**Color:** The color isn't the same throughout. There may be shades of brown, black, pink or red.

**Diameter:** The spot is larger than 6 millimeters across (about ¼ inch, which is the size of a pencil eraser).

**Evolving:** The spot is changing in color, shape or size.



To learn more, visit

**HealthyAdvice.com/  
ProtectSkin**

You can also visit these websites:

- **American Academy of Dermatology**  
www.aad.org
- **The Skin Cancer Foundation**  
www.skincancer.org

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## What You Can Do

Try these tips to help prevent skin cancer:

- **Stay out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.** This is the time when the sun's rays are the strongest. Try to plan outdoor activities for early in the morning or evening.
- **Wear sunscreen,** even if you have a darker skin tone. You can still get skin cancer if you have darker skin. Don't forget your lips, the tips of your ears and the backs of your hands and neck.
- **Wear protective clothing.** Sunscreen can't protect you completely from the sun's harmful rays. Wear a hat with a 2-3 inch brim, sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays, and dark, tightly-knit clothes when you're out in the sun.
- **Skip the tanning beds.** Use tinted moisturizers and makeup or self-tanning lotions to give your skin a bronze glow without the harmful UV rays.
- **Check your medicines.** Some medicines can make your skin more sensitive to sun, which means it can burn more easily.
- **Use protective moisturizers and makeup year-round.** Buy face moisturizer, makeup and body lotion with an SPF of 15 or higher.
- **Check your skin, head-to-toe, regularly.** The American Cancer Society recommends that you check your skin once a month. Most skin cancers can be treated successfully if found early.
- **Go to the dermatologist once a year** to have a skin cancer screening.

## Remember:

- Wear sunscreen of at least SPF 30 when you're going to be outside.
- Don't intentionally tan—skip tanning beds and stay out of the sun from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Check your skin once a month for changing moles and have a skin cancer screening once a year.