

# Skin Cancer: *Just the Facts*



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Anyone can get skin cancer, although some people are at higher risk. The most preventable cause of skin cancer is exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light, either from the sun or artificial sources of light, such as tanning beds.

## Risk Factors for Skin Cancer

The CDC lists the following factors that may increase your risk:

- Excessive sun exposure and indoor tanning beds
- Personal or family history of skin cancer
- Skin that burns, freckles, reddens easily, or becomes painful in the sun
- History of sunburns
- Certain types of moles and/or a large number of moles
- Blue or green eyes
- Blond or red hair

## Signs and Symptoms of Skin Cancer

A change in your skin is the most common sign of skin cancer. This could be a new growth, a sore that doesn't heal or a change in a mole. Not all skin cancers look the same. The CDC recommends remembering the signs of skin cancer with A-B-C-D-E:

**Asymmetrical** – Does the mole or spot have an irregular shape with two parts that look very different?

**Border** – Is the border irregular or jagged?

**Color** – Is the color uneven?

**Diameter** – Is the mole or spot larger than the size of a pea?

**Evolving** – Has the mole or spot changed during the past few weeks or months?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, make an appointment with your doctor to have the mole checked.

## Skin Cancer Prevention

The CDC suggests taking the following precautions to lower your risk for skin cancer:

- Stay in the shade, especially between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Wear clothing that covers your arms and legs.
- Wear a hat with a wide brim to shade your face, head, ears, and neck.
- Wear sunglasses that wrap around and block both UVA and UVB rays.
- Use sunscreen with sun protection factor (SPF) 15 or higher, and both UVA and UVB protection.
- Avoid indoor tanning.

According to The Skin Cancer Foundation, one in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime. Be proactive and protect yourself. Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns or feel you need to be screened for skin cancer.



Take precautions to lower your risk for skin cancer.

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