

Sunscreens – Why, When and Where?

LONG-TERM PROBLEMS FROM SUN EXPOSURE.....

- 70 % of skin cancers are located on the head and neck.
- 90 % of pre-skin cancers, called actinic keratoses, are on the arms, hands, face, ears and scalp.
- Sun-damage occurs year round. It doesn't take a break in the winter.
- Those most susceptible to developing skin cancer are light skinned people who are exposed to natural or artificial ultraviolet light on a regular basis. Also, people who get sunburned badly, even a few times, have more of a chance of developing skin cancers. Car or truck drivers and pilots typically will get more sun-damaged skin on the left side of their face and neck due to year round sun exposure through window glass.

SUN DAMAGED SKIN.....

- Sun-damaged skin can take on many characteristics. It can show a large number of freckles (lentigos), numerous broken blood vessels (telangectasias). It also can result in fine and heavy wrinkles and typically small hard, red, rough patches that feel like sand paper. These patches are called **actinic keratoses**. These are considered pre-cancerous lesions. One out of four people with **actinic keratoses** will develop skin cancer.
- Fortunately most skin cancers are not threatening to your general health. The most common type, called **basal cell carcinoma**, is a slow growing, reddish or whitish bump in the skin that typically grows slowly over many months to years. It will bleed with minor injury after a period of time.
- **Squamous cell carcinomas** are usually more rapidly growing lesions, growing over a period of one to two months to a year or so. They are red and bumpy, with a hard firm scab over the surface at times. They too, will bleed with a minor injury. Most **squamous cell carcinomas** will not metastasize (spread) to other areas of the body. However, some of these skin cancers do spread and can be fatal. **Squamous cell carcinomas** are usually associated with obviously sun-damaged skin.
- **Melanomas** are the most dangerous of all skin cancers. They typically are darker (but not always), irregularly shaped or multi-colored mole like growths. They are especially common on the trunk, arms and legs. These cancers are deadly and must be treated early to get high survival rates.
- All of the above cancers and pre-cancers are related to sun exposure. **Actinic keratoses, basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinomas** are associated with long term chronic exposure to sunlight. **Malignant melanoma** is especially related to a history of multiple, severe sunburns (especially in childhood). It is very important to protect younger children from sunburns.
- **If you have been diagnosed with a skin cancer;** a follow-up appointment should be scheduled every 3 months for the first year, then every 6 months thereafter.

SKIN PROTECTION.....

- How do you prevent the development of pre-skin cancers and skin cancers for your family and yourself? -----
AVOID THE SUN!!!!!!
- Get in the habit of wearing a hat when outside. Studies have shown that the wider the brim of a hat, the less the incidence of skin cancer in those patients.
- Keep your clothes on in the sun. Sunbathing is not in your skin's best interest.
- Use sunscreen with both UVA and UVB protection.

-OVER-

- Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before you go into the sun. Sunscreen works best if given a chance to penetrate your skin before you start sweating or wipe it away with activity.
- Use a 15 SPF sunscreen daily on your face, in the winter.
- In the summer, or if you expect extremely high sun exposure, use a 30 SPF or higher sunscreen.
- Reapply sunscreen regularly during the day particularly after swimming or sweating a lot.
- There are a lot of good sunscreens available.
- Some suggested broad spectrum UVA and UVB sunscreens are:
 - **Neutrogena Healthy Defense daily Moisturizer – SPF 30** (Use daily, year round)
 - **Neutrogena Sensitive Skin SPF 30** (for sensitive skin if stinging occurs with other sunscreens)
 - **Neutrogena UVA/UVB Sun block w/Parsol – SPF 45**
 - **Coppertone Sport SPF 30** (This product tends not to cause burning of the eyes with sweating because it does attach well to the skin and is waterproof. Athletes like this product very much).
 - **Solar Protection UVA/UVB 58** by Fallene, Ltd. (This product is recommended for sensitive skin).
 - **Vanicream SPF 30**
 - **Eucerine SPF 30 moisturizer**