

Keeping safe in the summer sun

Summer is the perfect time of year to be active outdoors. But you should take the right safeguards to avoid overexposure to harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation so you don't put yourself at risk for skin cancer. Talk to your doctor about any medications you might currently take that may require you to minimize your sun exposure.

UV rays and skin cancer

UV rays are an unseen type of radiation that comes from the sun, tanning beds and sunlamps. Sunlight can cause loss of skin elasticity, thickening of the skin, noncancerous skin growths and pigment changes such as liver spots. Sun exposure has also been linked to skin cancers, including basal cell cancer, squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma.



Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. While some types of skin cancer are highly treatable, the third most common skin cancer – melanoma – is more dangerous. Between 65 and 90 percent of melanomas are caused by being exposed to UV radiation.

Screening for skin cancer

The American Cancer Society and the American Academy of Dermatology recommend regular self exams to check for any changes to marks on your skin, including shape, color and size. A skin exam by a dermatologist or health professional should be part of a routine checkup. Treatments are most effective and less disfiguring when skin cancer is found early.

Steps toward prevention

UV rays are at their strongest in the middle of the day, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., during the late spring and early summer. Take these steps to help you safely enjoy the sun:

- **Avoid direct sunlight by seeking shade.**
- **Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15.**
- **Cover exposed skin by wearing hats, pants and long sleeves.**
- **Don't use indoor tanning beds or sunlamps.**
- **Wear sunglasses that block 100 percent of UVA and UVB rays.**

Source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cdc.gov.

Please note: Preventive care services and screenings are only covered when rendered by an in-network physician or health care professional.