

The Skinny on Skin Cancer



Going to the beach, playing at the pool, attending outdoor sporting events... these activities are fun, but they can also put you at risk for skin cancer.

WHAT IS SKIN CANCER?

Skin cancer occurs when skin cells grow abnormally. It occurs most often on skin that is exposed to the sun, including the scalp, face, lips, ears, neck, chest, legs, arms and hands. It can also form in other areas, but isn't as common.

WHO IS AT RISK?

According to the Mayo Clinic, risk factors for skin cancer include:

- A history of sunburns
- A weakened immune system
- Aging
- Exposure to harsh chemicals or substances
- Fair or sensitive skin
- Family history of skin cancer
- Living in a sunny or high-altitude climate
- Moles or abnormal moles
- Personal history of skin cancer
- Too much sun exposure

CAN SKIN CANCER BE PREVENTED?

You may not be able to prevent skin cancer completely, but you can lower your risk by taking safe skin precautions.

- **Avoid the sun during peak hours** – From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. If it's not possible for you to steer clear during these times, take special care to protect your skin.
- **Cover up:** Wear protective clothing made of tightly-knit fabrics that you aren't able to see through when held up to a light.
- **Don't be fooled:** Overcast days may seem like safer sun days, but they're not. The sun's rays can travel through clouds and penetrate your skin.
- **Skip tanning beds:** It might feel refreshing to visit a tanning bed every once in a while, but your skin will not thank you down the road. Tanning beds and sun lamps can cause major damage to your skin.
- **Wear sunglasses:** Protect your eyes and surrounding areas with sunglasses that have 99 to 100 percent UV absorption (check the label when purchasing).
- **Wear sunscreen:** Before you head outside, be sure to apply sunscreen and lip balm or gloss with at least SPF 15. If you're going to be outside for a long period of time, make sure you have enough to re-apply often.

Visit www.BlueKC.com for more information about health and wellness.

Source: The Mayo Clinic and American Cancer Society



Kansas City



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