Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States.

- The two most common skin cancers (basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas) are highly curable but can be disfiguring and costly.
- Melanoma (the third most common skin cancer) may be deadly.
- Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or from a tanning device can cause dangerous, lasting damage to your skin.

Common Risk Factors for Skin Cancer Include:

- Light skin, or skin that burns, freckles, or reddens easily; but skin of all colors can get skin cancer
- Large number of moles
- Personal or family history of skin cancer
- History of sun exposure
- History of sunburns, especially in early life
- History of indoor tanning
  - The average tanning bed gives 2 to 10 times more UVA radiation than the sun
  - Using tanning beds before the age of 35 increases a person's risk for developing melanoma by 75%

Skin Cancer in People of Color

- Even if you have a darker skin tone, always tan or rarely burn, you can still get skin cancer
- Skin cancer is often diagnosed later in people of color, making it harder to treat
- Melanoma in people of color most often occurs on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, under the nail (subungual) and in the nail areas
- No matter your skin tone, UV radiation can lead to skin damage, premature aging, and hyperpigmentation. Protecting your skin is important!

Ways to Prevent UV Light Exposure

The majority of skin cancers are caused by exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light and can be prevented with sun safety practices:

1. **Seek Shade**
   - Find shade under a dense tree canopy, shade sail, or pavilion
   - Carry a sun umbrella for personal shade
   - Use a pop-up UV shelter when at the beach or park
   - Whenever possible, stay out of the sun from 10 AM - 4 PM when UV radiation is the strongest

2. **Wear Sunscreen**
   - Broad spectrum UVA and UVB, SPF 30 or higher
   - Reapplication is necessary every 2 hours and after swimming, sweating, or toweling off
   - Most people do not put on enough sunscreen—aim for one ounce, which is about a shot glass or palmful

3. **Wear Protective Clothing**
   - Long sleeves/pants with a dense weave or built in UPF
   - Wide-brimmed hat
   - Closed-toe shoes and socks that cover the ankle

4. **Wear Sunglasses**
   - Choose sunglasses with a UV protective coating
   - Wearing sunglasses helps protect the delicate skin around our eyes
   - UV rays can also increase risk of cataracts & macular degeneration—it makes sense to protect your eyes!

5. **Check the UV Index - Know Before You Go!**
   - The UV index can be found in most weather apps.
   - Dermatologists recommend sun protection when the UV index is 3 and above
   - As levels approach 6 and above, it's best to limit your time in the sun
UV Index Chart Adopted from National Weather Service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UV Value and Category</th>
<th>Effects</th>
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| 1-2 ("Low")          | A UV index reading of 2 or less means low danger from the sun’s UV rays for the average person:  
  • Wear sunglasses on bright days. In winter, reflection off snow can nearly double UV strength.  
  • If you burn easily, cover up and use sunscreen of at least SPF-30. |
| 3-5 ("Moderate")    | A UV index reading of 3 to 5 means moderate risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure.  
  • Take precautions, such as covering up, wearing a hat and sunglasses, if you will be outside. Use sunscreen of at least SPF-30.  
  • Stay in shade near midday when the sun is strongest. |
| 6-7 ("High")        | A UV index reading of 6 to 7 means high risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure. Protection against sun damage is needed.  
  • Reduce time in the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.  
  • Cover up, wear a hat and sunglasses, and use sunscreen with a SPF of at least 30. |
| 8-10 ("Very High") | A UV index reading of 8 to 10 means very high risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure. Protection against sun damage is needed.  
  • Take extra precautions. Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, use sunscreen of at least SPF-30,  
    and wear a long-sleeved shirt and pants if practical.  
  • Minimize sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.  
  • White sand on the beach will reflect UV rays and can double UV exposure. |
| 11+ ("Extreme")     | A UV index reading of 11 or higher means extreme risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure. Try to avoid sun exposure during midday hours, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Apply sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 liberally every 2 hours.  
  • Take all precautions. Unprotected skin can burn in minutes. Beachgoers should know that white sand  
    and other bright surfaces reflect UV and will increase UV exposure.  
  • Try to avoid sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.  
  • Seek shade, cover up, wear a hat and sunglasses, and use sunscreen. |

ABCDEs of Melanoma

Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer. When detected early, melanoma is highly treatable. Know your skin. Perform a self-exam each month. You can even ask a partner or friend to look at your back and scalp. If you see any of these warning signs, show them to your provider right away.
**Resources for How to Perform a Self-Skin Exam**

American Cancer Society: [ACS Self Skin Exam Directions](#)
American Academy of Dermatology: [AAD Self Skin Exam Directions](#)

**Additional Resources:**
Want to learn more? Check out the following resources:

- National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention
- Skin Smart Campus
- Skin Cancer Foundation (skin cancer facts and statistics)
- Sun Safety (CDC)
- Indoor Tanning Facts (American Academy of Dermatology)

**Skin Smart Campus**

The University of Rochester University Health Services has been recognized as a Skin Smart Campus by The National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention by:

- Providing safe and healthy learning and living environments on- and off-campus
- Pledging to keep indoor tanning devices off our campus and out of our affiliated buildings.
- Promoting skin cancer prevention policies and education

The Indoor Tan-Free Skin Smart Campus Initiative is sponsored by the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention in response to the 2014 U.S. Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent Skin Cancer which concluded that there is a strong association between increased risk of skin cancer and indoor tanning use. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure from indoor tanning is completely avoidable which allows for interventions to help reduce skin-cancer related illness and deaths. Numerous studies have found that skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States, with melanoma as one of the most common cancers diagnosed among young adults. According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer Working Group, the use of indoor tanning facilities before the age of 35 increases the risk of developing melanoma by 75%.

**Sunscreen Dispenser Locations:**
- To be determined