

# WellnessWatch



Welcome to **WellnessWatch** -- The Starr Group's monthly digest featuring articles to keep **YOU** current with latest **#health** and **#wellness** trends and fitness buzz. *Be well!*



## Topic of the Month: **UV SAFETY**

Summer is in full swing. Although some beaches, campsites and amusement parks are still closed because of the resurgence in COVID-19 cases, people are still outdoors in the sun. Whether working jobs in the community or relaxing in backyards, people need to remember the skin damage Ultraviolet (UV) radiation can inflict and employ the use of sunscreen.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about any medications you are taking. Certain medications -- and even some common vitamins -- can make a person more sensitive to UV rays and more susceptible to sunburn.

UV protection is needed even on cloudy days and all year long. Exposure to UV rays can damage the cornea (the clear portion of the eye in front of the pupil) and the conjunctiva (a layer of cells covering the inside of the eyelid and the whites of the eye). Damage to the eyes can occur following exposure to sunlight reflected by snow, ice, water, or sand.

UV radiation is not limited to sun exposure. Tanning beds are not a safe alternative to natural sunlight. UV rays damage your skin, whether the radiation comes from tanning beds or natural sunlight. Gel manicure lamps and welding torches also contribute to UV exposure! Any exposure increases the risk of skin cancer, premature skin aging and eye damage.

### **Common types of UV cancers are:**

- Basal Cell
- Squamous Cell
- Melanoma
- Merkel Cell Carcinoma
- Lip Cancer

**The best way to reduce the risk of skin cancer and eye damage is to take precaution to prevent UV exposure.**



# Did you know?



- Across all ethnicities and genders, 50.1% reported getting at least one sunburn in the past year.<sup>2</sup> (13% Black Women; 9% Black Men; 38% Hispanic Women; 32% Hispanic Men; 39% Caucasian Women; 46.9% Caucasian Men)
- Only 10% of U.S. adults use sunscreen daily, and almost half (47%) never wear sunscreen.<sup>3</sup>
- Most people with Melanoma are cured by their initial surgery. Among all people with melanoma of the skin, from the time of initial diagnosis, the 5-year survival rate is 92%.<sup>4</sup>
- In the past two decades there has been a 20% increase in the number of Hispanics with an incidence of melanoma, which is the most dangerous type of skin cancer.<sup>5</sup>
- U.S. sunscreen manufacture industry estimates that \$399 million is spent on skin-care items annually.<sup>6</sup>





## **Limiting UV Exposure for Outdoor Workers<sub>5</sub>**

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States and it is most often caused by exposure to UV light. Some simple steps to reduce the risk of developing skin cancer:

- Wear clothing that covers your arms and legs
- Wear a hat with a wide brim to cover your face, head, ears and neck
- Wear sunglasses
- Use sunscreen with sun protective factor (SPF) 15 or higher, with both UVA and UVB protection

## **What To Do If You Get Sunburned<sub>7</sub>**

If a majority of your work is outdoors, you are at greater risk for sunburn. Here are some home remedies to alleviate the

discomfort of sunburn:

- Take an over-the-counter **pain reliever** (Advil, Motrin IB or Aleve) to control pain and swelling.
- **Cool the skin** with a clean towel dampened with cool tap water. Or take a cool bath.
- **Moisturize** with lotion or gel with aloe.
- **Drink water** to prevent dehydration.
- **Leave blisters alone.** If they break, clean them with mild soap and water. Apply antibiotic ointment and cover with a non-stick bandage.
- **Peel naturally.** Continue to moisturize.
- **Avoid further sun exposure.**
- **Avoid using '-caine' products**, such as benzocaine. It can irritate and cause allergic reaction, and is linked to a potentially deadly condition (methemoglobinemia).

## When To See Your Doctor<sup>7</sup>

Most sunburns heal on their own. However, you should see treatment if you have severe or repeated sunburn. Your primary care physician may refer you to a dermatologist if any abnormalities are noticed.

**Melanoma** accounts for about 1% of all skin cancers diagnosed in the U.S. but it causes most of the skin cancer deaths. It is estimated that 6,850 deaths (4,610 men and 2,240 women) from melanoma will occur this year.

Melanoma begins on the skin where it is easy to see and treat. But if it is not found early, it can grow deeper into the skin, and spread to other parts of the body. Once melanoma spreads beyond the skin to other parts of the body, it becomes hard to treat and can be fatal.

**Be smart. Stay out of the sun. Cover up. Use Sunscreen and wear sunglasses.**



Learn More!

1. **Cancer Health** <https://www.cancerhealth.com/page/cancer-awareness-months-days#july>
2. **WTAMU.EDU : Why don't dark-skinned people get sunburns?** <https://wtamu.edu/~cbaird/sq/2013/08/19/why-dont-dark-skinned-people-get-sunburns/>
3. **PRNewsWire.com Sunscreen Stats** <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/2019-realseif-sun-safety-report-only-1-in-10-americans-uses-sunscreen-daily-men-significantly-more-likely-than-women-to-reapply-sunscreen-and-get-annual-skin-check-300889933.html>
4. **Cancer.net Melanoma Statistics** <https://www.cancer.net/cancer-types/melanoma/statistics#:~:text=Most%20people%20with%20melanoma%20are,%2Dyear%20survival%20is%2092%25.>
5. **Total Landscape Care** <https://www.totallandscapecare.com/green-industry-news/reports-of-skin-cancer-increase-draastically-in-u-s-hispanic-population/>
6. **IBIA World** <https://www.ibisworld.com/united-states/market-research-reports/sunscreen-manufacturing-industry/>
7. **Mayo Clinic Treatment of Sunburn** <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/sunburn/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20355928>
8. **ConstructConnect.com : Sun Protection Tips For Construction Workers**  
<https://www.constructconnect.com/blog/sun-protection-tips-construction-workers#:~:text=For%20construction%20workers%2C%20summer%20means,of%20skin%20cancer%20each%20year.>



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