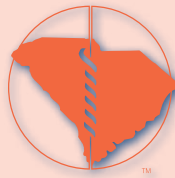


SCMA health watch



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Health Tips from South Carolina's Doctors

SKIN PROTECTION FAQs

Sponsored by the South Carolina Medical Association's Medical Student Section

With August being one of the hottest months in South Carolina, it is important to address some common questions people have in relation to skin care protection.

Q: HOW DO I STAY PROTECTED?

A: There are several ways to protect your skin from the sun's harmful rays while still enjoying the outdoors.

Protect Your Skin With Clothing: Items such as hats, cover-ups, and sunglasses are great examples for sun protection.

Always Use Sunscreen: Generously apply a broad-spectrum (UVA and UVB protection), sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15. Apply sunscreen to dry skin 30 minutes before sun exposure to allow time for absorption. Reapply sunscreen at least every 2 hours.

Avoid Sun Midday: Avoid outdoor activities between 10am and 4pm when the sun's rays are the most harmful.

Do Not Use Tanning Beds: Tanning beds emit harmful UVA and UVB rays, and are just as bad, if not worse, for your skin than natural sunlight!

Q: WHAT ARE UVA AND UVB RAYS?

A: Sunlight consists of two types of harmful rays – ultraviolet A (UVA) rays and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays. Both cause skin cancer and premature skin aging. While UVB rays cause sunburn, UVA rays do not and their effects are not apparent for years. UVA rays penetrate the skin more deeply than UVB light, and impact your skin during any daylight hour, while UVB rays cause most of their damage between 10am and 4pm. UVA rays can even pass through most types of glass, while UVB rays are blocked by window glass. Both UVA and UVB rays pass through clouds so you need to wear sunscreen even on cloudy days.

Q: WHAT IS SPF?

A: SPF stands for Sun Protection Factor and is a rating system for UVB protection, but not UVA protection. UVA rays are very dangerous too, so it is ALWAYS important to wear a sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection. UVB rays cause sunburn. The higher the SPF number, the more UVB protection, and the longer it will take for your skin to burn. However, since all sunscreens wear-off over time, you must REAPPLY SUNSCREEN

EVERY TWO HOURS.

Q: HOW DO I DETECT SKIN DAMAGE?

A: The American Cancer Society Guidelines for the Early Detection of Melanoma:

Ages 40+ Yearly skin exam by a health care professional and monthly self-examination.

Ages 20-39 Skin exam by a health care professional every three years and monthly self-examination.

During self-skin examinations, you should check for melanoma, the deadliest skin cancer. The ABCD rule helps you to distinguish it from a regular mole:

A- Asymmetry: When one half of a mole does not look like the other half.

B- Border: When the edges of a mole look jagged or notched instead of smooth.

C- Color: When there is more than one color present in a mole.

D- Diameter: When the mole is more than a quarter of an inch, or continually grows.



Did You Know?

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

Evidence of sunburn may not appear for up to 24 hours, so the color of your skin during an outdoor activity is a poor indicator of the sun's impact on your skin.

References: American Academy of Dermatology, The Skin Cancer Foundation, SkinCarePhysicians., Medline Plus.

About the SCMA's Medical Student Section:

The Medical Student Section is comprised of medical students from both the University of South Carolina School of Medicine and the Medical University of South Carolina. The goal of the Medical Student Section is to provide students with tools and resources while they pursue their medical education.

The purpose of the SCMA Health Watch program is to disseminate health information to the citizens of South Carolina and allow them to become more empowered in taking charge of their own health. To subscribe to this free publication please email news@scmanet.org or call 1.800.327.1021. Please reproduce and distribute this information. When distributing this information in another format, please credit the South Carolina Medical Association.

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