



Prevention 101

Skin Care and Protection

The skin is the body's largest organ. Healthy skin provides a barrier between the inside of the body and the outside environment. A bump, rash, or dry patch on the skin, as well as hair and nail conditions, can be perplexing. Some can be harmless (though nevertheless annoying), yet others can be warning signs of more serious medical concerns, so always consult your health care provider for proper diagnosis and treatment.

WHAT Are the Facts?

One bad sunburn in childhood doubles the risk factor for melanoma later in life.

Protecting children against ultraviolet exposure is essential for skin health into adulthood. A blistering sunburn during childhood increases the risk of [melanoma](#) as an adult. Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer.

Men are diagnosed with skin cancer more often than women.

According to the [American Cancer Society](#), men are twice as likely to develop skin cancer as women. In fact, it's more common than [prostate](#) cancer.



Each hour, one person dies from skin cancer.

About 2,800 people will die of non-melanoma skin cancer and about 8,000 will die of melanoma in the U.S. this year. Many of these deaths could have been prevented by simply protecting the skin from the sun.

Skin cancer is most deadly for African Americans, Asians, American-Indians and Latinos.

African Americans, Asians and Latinos are at low risk for developing skin cancer, but have a higher death rate once diagnosed.

One in five Americans will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime.

WHAT Are Risk Factors for Skin Cancer?

People with certain risk factors are more likely than others to develop skin cancer. Risk factors vary for different types of skin cancer, but some general risk factors are having:

- A lighter natural skin color
- Family history of skin cancer
- A personal history of skin cancer
- Exposure to the sun through work and play
- A history of sunburns early in life
- Skin that burns, freckles, reddens easily, or becomes painful in the sun



WHAT You Need

Prevention and early detection are the solutions to protecting your skin and reducing your risk for skin cancer. As part of a routine cancer-related check-up, your health care provider should check your skin carefully. If you have any concerns about suspicious lesions, ask your health care provider about the value of a referral to a dermatologist.