

www.skin-cancer-experiences.com

Skin Cancer Guide

A family guide to skin cancer awareness in a nutshell.
Let it be a reminder to do self exams, schedule regular visits to
your dermatologist or alternate health specialist and always use
good sense in the sun.

It is for your health, your families and your future.

Risk Factors

Skin complexion – If you are light skinned, have red or blonde hair, blue or light colored eyes your risk is higher.

Freckles or moles – You are at a higher risk if you freckle easily and have moles, especially new ones that occur.

Sun Burn – A sun burn or repeated sunburns anytime in your life from childhood on to your senior years is a risk factor. Sun burn is skin damage and can show up as skin cancer sooner or later in your life.

Overexposure to the sun and dark tanning – Repeated overexposure to the sun's [Ultraviolet Rays](#) will age your skin sooner and put you at risk for skin cancer. Five to fifteen minutes in the noon day sun is sufficient for vitamin D health benefits, after that you are damaging your skin. NEVER ...NEVER, go beyond a very faint pink color. The total amount of exposure over a lifetime is a risk factor.

History of skin cancer – “History” could be ...family history or ...personal history. If someone in your family had skin cancer ...or if you, yourself, have had skin cancer, then you are at a higher risk.

Tanning beds – Frequent or overuse of [Tanning Beds](#) does present a risk and studies have linked it to melanoma. This is not only true for teens, but adults as well. There is such a thing as a safe tanning bed and the exposure time in one of these beds should be no longer than five to eleven minutes. Unfortunately many tanning parlors do not have the proper equipment to be considered safe. Their use of full spectrum bulbs does not produce the ultraviolet radiation (especially UVB) to allow your body to convert cholesterol into vitamin D, thus removing that benefit. Most tanning parlors use magnetic ballasts. These are unsafe because of the electro-magnetic-fields (EMFs) being produced. There are newer ballasts which virtually eliminate this risk and are safe. If you do find a “safe” tanning parlor, it is important that you limit your exposure and frequency to five to eleven minutes as mentioned above, or limit your time according to your risk and the instructions.

Prevention

Start young – If you are a parent, you should teach your children at a young age about using [Sense In The Sun](#), especially for anyone at high risk as shown above. Some risk can be lessened by eating and living a healthy lifestyle. This boosts your [Immune System](#), making you more resilient to any disease. You can be the one to change the health for future generations of your family tree.

Avoid sunburn – Protect your infants and your children from sunburn. A single sunburn from infancy to adulthood could cause enough damage to trigger skin cancer at some point in your life ...sooner or later!

Avoid excessive tanning – The darker the tan the stronger the sign it is that your skin has been damaged. This only serves to age your skin prematurely and cause you to have early wrinkles and possible skin cancer.

Length of time in the sun – It only takes 5 to 15 minutes of body exposure during the mid-day sun for you to reap the benefits of the [Sunshine Vitamin D`](#). When you see your skin turn a very light shade of pink, your body has already manufactured the amount of vitamin D that it will and skin damage is occurring. If you are at a high risk, it would be wise to avoid it and depend of vitamin D rich foods and whole food vitamin D3 supplements.

Use sunscreen – [Sunscreen](#) is effective to avoid UV damage to your skin. If your risk is high and you consistently spend long times in the sun then you should use a sunscreen with a high SPF of 30 or 50. If your risk is low and you're not consistently spending long periods, then a SPF 15 would be fine. With the SPF 15 some ultraviolet rays pass through allowing you to benefit from vitamin D. Choose a [Safe Sunscreen](#), such as Bert's Bees, without questionable chemicals. Here are some chemical ingredients you should avoid – Para amino benzoic acid - Oxytol salicylate - Avobenzone - Oxybenzone - Cinoxate - Padimate O - Ciozybenzone - Phenylbenzimidazole - Homosalate - Sulisobenzene - Menthyl anthranilate - Trolamone salicylate, Oxtocrylene - Octinoxate - Nano zinc oxide - Octisilate, Insulizole - Methoryl SX.

Wear protective clothing – Protect yourself, your infants and children from overexposure with wide brim hats and other protective clothing. Most skin

cancer occurs on overexposed areas of the face, ears, neck and arms.
[Protective Clothing](#) can help avoid this.

Beach umbrellas – Always take a [Beach Umbrella or Sun Shelter](#) when you make that trip to the beach or lake.

Do self skin exams – A good time to do this is when getting out of the shower, nude and in front of the mirror. Learn how to [Identify Skin Cancer](#) and keep a chart of suspicious moles or anything new appearing on your skin. Watch for changes in size, shape, color, borders and elevation. See a dermatologist when you see any of this. Early detection is great prevention.

Diagnosis

A self skin exam - This involves you detecting the suspicious [Warning Signs](#) on your skin and then seeing a dermatologist for further determination.

Medical history – Most likely your doctor will discuss your medical history including whether or not skin cancer runs in your family.

Skin Examination – Your doctor will note the size, color, shape and texture of the suspicious area and may then examine your lymph glands for swelling.

Biopsy – In order to determine if a suspicious lesion is cancerous or not, the doctor will perform a biopsy. This involves the removal of part or all of the suspicious tissue to be examined under microscope by a pathologist and determined if it is cancerous or not. You will usually have to wait a few days for the report to come back.

Staging – If the biopsy result show melanoma, then your doctor will have to determine how deep it has grown under the skin and whether or not it has spread to lymph nodes or inward to other parts of the body. If it is non-melanoma your doctor will plan his course of treatment according to the [Stage](#) and your condition.

Treatment

Simple or extensive – The extent of your treatment depends upon the type and extent of your skin cancer. It could be one or a combination of any of the following.

Cryosurgery – The process of freezing abnormal or diseased tissue by liquid nitrogen or argon gas. This is used for non-melanoma cancer and most often for a precancerous condition called actinic keratosis. It is not very often used alone to treat skin cancer. It has a 99% cure rate for [Actinic Keratosis](#). When used on basal cell cancer studies showed it cured over 90 of 100 people.

Curettage and desiccation – The dermatologist uses a curette, a spoon like instrument to scoop out the basal cell carcinoma. Desiccation is the application of electric current to control the bleeding and kill the remaining cancer cells. No stitching is required for healing. This method is used for small cancers in non-crucial areas of your body.

Surgical excision – The cancerous tissue is cut out along with a margin of surrounding healthy tissue and then stitched up.

Mohs surgery – This is performed by a surgeon who has additional training in pathology. The surgeon removes the cancerous tissue layer by layer and examines it each time under the microscope until all the cancer has been removed. [Mohs Surgery](#) minimizes the chances of re-growth and leaves a better cosmetic appearance.

Radiation therapy – [Radiation](#) is often used to treat skin cancer that is occurring in areas that are difficult to treat with surgery. It can have short term and long lasting side effects that may not show up for many years. It is often successful in treating the cancer.

Chemotherapy – It is most often used for treating melanoma after it has grown inward and spread to vital organs. It is sometimes used to treat [Squamous Cell Carcinoma](#) if it has travelled inward.

Chemotherapy topical cream – This is usually used for [Actinic Keratosis](#) and some small, new growth, basal cell skin cancer. You can apply it

yourself at home and the treatment lasts 2-3 weeks. It can be effective and may (or usually) causes irritation and burning on the skin. When the treatment is stopped the burning and irritation go away.

Alternative Practices

There are alternative practices available to improve your health.

If you are so inclined, **you should consult with the alternative health professional of your choice as well as your medical doctor.**

Ask questions, like ...how long have you been practicing medicine / natural medicine?

How many times have you treated this type of cancer?

What has been your success rate?

What are the pros ...cons ...side effects ...long term after effects?

Is there a reasonable conflict between the alternative approach and the medical approach?

By doing this you will be able to make a more informed, better decision.

Using both, as complimentary, could be a good decision for you.

To prevent recurrence and maintain optimum health it is always wise to live a healthy lifestyle.

You can find more information on alternative treatments on this website:
<http://www.skin-cancer-experiences.com/types-of-alternative-medicine.html>

Sun Safety Checklist

If you're planning a day, weekend or vacation at the lake, beach or your favorite resort, here's a reminder of what you should bring along.

A safe (chemical free) sunscreen such as Bert's Bees which is available in health food stores and most pharmacies. Use one with a SPF-15 or more for moderate exposure. If you plan on spending most of the day in the sun, use a SPF-30 or more. Some sunscreens claim to last all day while swimming. I don't know about that. Reapply as needed.

Find a UV Monitoring Wristband. The brand name recommended on the Dr. Oz show was [UVSunSense Monitoring Wristband](#). When used in conjunction with a SPF-15 sunscreen or higher it will alert you when to reapply your sunscreen or when you've had enough UVA and B rays for the day.

Sun Protection Clothing – Bring along [Wide Brimmed Hats](#) and other tightly woven, loose fitting clothing to cover as much as possible.

UV blocking sunglasses - [Sunglasses](#) for both UVA and UVB rays.

Sun shelter or a beach umbrella – At many resorts and beaches you can easily rent [Umbrellas](#).

Aloe Vera – [Aloe Vera](#) is a home remedy that works better than anything else I have ever used for sunburn. I highly recommend bringing some along because I know from my own experiences, it works. If you have access to a plant, this is the strongest and purest form to use. Cut off a stem, open it up and rub the fleshy gel side all over the sunburn. It will relieve the burning, stop the blistering and heal your skin in a very short time. You can use aloe vera juice or an aloe vera product and you should get relief, but the pure aloe vera itself provides the best and fastest healing.

Some studies show that as little as **one sunburn before the age of 18 can cause melanoma.**

If you're a parent teach your young ones to have fun safely in the sun.

Don't be scared by the dangers of the sun; **there are benefits as well.** I'm emphasizing the dangers because at the lake, beach or on vacation, most people do tend to overdo it.

If you sun bathe moderately from time to time (5 to 15 minutes of noontime sun) and are not at high risk, you'll benefit from [Vitamin D](#) ...and that's a good thing.

This is purely informational and none of it is intended as any advice that anyone should follow. I am not a health professional of any kind. I am a skin cancer survivor spreading skin cancer awareness. You should always consult with a qualified professional.

To learn more about skin cancer, visit [Gary Harmon's site:](#)
<http://www.skin-cancer-experiences.com>

This Skin Cancer Guide may be printed, copied for redistribution, but must be copied in it's entirety including all links. Links must be live on the internet.

© skin-cancer-experiences.com 2011 - All Rights Reserved