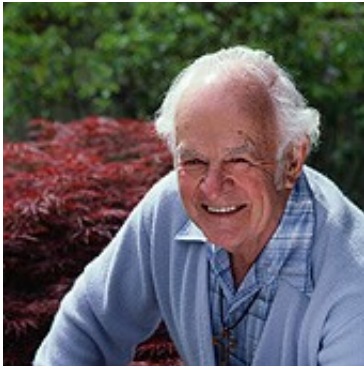


Melanoma a big threat to older men

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They're less likely than women to take sun precautions and check for growths, survey results show.

(HealthDay) -- Older men have an increased risk of developing melanoma, but most are careless about sun protection and do not know how to properly check themselves for signs of skin cancer, a new survey reveals.

This is particularly worrisome because nearly 132,000 new cases of melanoma will be diagnosed in 2012, according to the American Academy of Dermatology, which conducted the online poll.

"This survey demonstrates that many men do not protect themselves from the sun when outdoors and that some still believe that sun exposure is good for their health. This is a very troubling combination in light of the fact that the major risk factor for melanoma is exposure to

ultraviolet light," dermatologist Dr. Thomas Rohrer, a clinical associate professor of dermatology at Brown University School of Medicine, said in an academy news release.

Just 29 percent of men report always protecting their skin outside, the national survey showed. Meanwhile, 43 percent of women take the necessary precautions.

Moreover, 39 percent of men said they preferred to simply enjoy the sun and not worry about how to protect themselves from its harmful rays, compared with 28 percent of women.

Although 59 percent of women said they know how to examine their own skin for signs of cancer, the study also showed that just 46 percent of the men surveyed knew how this should be done.

"Men need to examine their skin and see a dermatologist if they spot anything changing, bleeding or growing," Rohrer said.

Fortunately, the researchers noted, the five-year survival rate for people whose [melanoma](#) is diagnosed and treated before it spreads to the [lymph nodes](#) is 98 percent.

"The survey results should serve as a wake-up call to men to be vigilant about protecting their skin from [sun exposure](#) and examining their skin regularly for skin cancer," Rohrer concluded. "Loved ones can assist by examining their partners' skin and noting anything suspicious. These exams are vital since the early detection of skin cancer helps save lives."

The academy is distributing public service announcements to television, cable and radio stations nationwide to help raise awareness on how people can protect themselves from [skin cancer](#).

More information: The American Cancer Society has more about [skin cancer](#).

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