

As summer approaches, experts offer tips on preventing skin cancer

May 26 2013



Sun protection, regular skin checks help lower your risk.

(HealthDay)—Memorial Day weekend is the unofficial start of summer, and experts note that you need to protect your skin while spending time in the sun.

[Skin cancer](#) is the most common type of cancer in the United States, but it's also one of the most preventable, according to doctors at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City.

One in five Americans will develop skin cancer during his or her life, according to a medical center news release. The most common kind of skin cancer is [basal cell carcinoma](#), which has a 99 percent cure rate when caught early. The most serious type of skin cancer is melanoma, which is the fastest rising type of cancer among men and the second

fastest among women.

Experts offer these steps you can take to reduce your risk of skin cancer:

- Get an annual dermatology checkup to monitor changes in skin appearance. Do self-checks every month to monitor your brown spots and freckles. If you have a lot of brown spots, discuss total body photography with a dermatologist so your doctor can keep photographic records of your moles and watch closely for any changes.
- Wear sunscreen every day throughout the year, not just in summer. Apply it thoroughly to all exposed areas.
- Never sunbathe. Sun dissolves the collagen and elastin that keeps your skin healthy.

You should also follow the ABCDEs and tell your doctor or dermatologist if your moles have:

- **Asymmetry**, in which one half of the mole is unlike the other half.
- **Borders** that are irregular, ragged, notched or poorly defined.
- **Color** that varies from one area to another, with shades of tan, brown, black and sometimes white, pink, red or blue.
- **Diameters** that are the size of a pencil eraser or larger.
- **Elevation**, in which a mole or skin lesion is raised or has an

uneven surface.

More information: The U.S. National Cancer Institute has more about [skin cancer prevention](#).

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Citation: As summer approaches, experts offer tips on preventing skin cancer (2013, May 26)
retrieved 25 April 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-05-summer-approaches-experts-skin-cancer.html>

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