

body

Your Monthly Guide to Good Health

Save Your Skin

The skin is the body's largest organ. It protects the internal organs, regulates body temperature, and even communicates with the brain so that we experience the sensations of touch and pain. Cancers of the skin are the most common cancer in the United States. Signs of skin cancer include a new growth; a change in the size or color of a mole; spread of pigmentation beyond its border; and change in the appearance of a nodule or bump.



Types of Skin Cancer

There are different types of skin cancer. Non-melanoma skin cancer generally originates in the basal cells or squamous cells of the skin and develops on areas of the body that have been exposed to sunlight. When detected and treated early, these cancers are very likely to be cured. Melanoma skin cancer is less common, but more dangerous than non-melanoma skin cancer and causes more skin cancer deaths. The American Cancer Society reports that melanoma is almost always curable when detected in its early stages.

Risk Factors

Risk factors for both non-melanoma and melanoma skin cancers include:

- Unprotected and/or excessive exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation
- Fair complexion
- Family history
- Multiple or atypical moles
- Severe sunburns as a child

Prevention and Early Detection

Limiting exposure to strong sunlight is essential to skin cancer prevention. Additionally, it is vital to have skin examined regularly. The American Cancer Society makes the following recommendations:

- Avoid the sun between 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Seek shade, particularly in the middle of the day.
- Cover up with protective clothing made of tightly woven fabrics.
- Use sunscreen and lip balm with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher.
- Use sunscreen even on overcast days.
- Cover your head with a wide-brimmed hat, shading your face, ears and neck.
- Wear sunglasses with 99% to 100% UV absorption.
- Avoid other sources of UV light such as tanning beds and sun lamps.
- Check for abnormal moles and have them removed.



Regular examinations of the skin lead to early detection and successful treatment of most skin cancers.

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**YOU
HAVE A
1 IN 20
RISK OF
DEVELOPING
COLORECTAL
CANCER.**

Cancers of the colon and rectum combined—or colorectal cancers—are the third most common site of new cancer cases in men and women in the United States, excluding skin cancers. The American Cancer Society estimates that 101,340 new cases of colon cancer and 39,870 new cases of rectal cancer occurred in 2011.

The good news is that many colorectal cancer cases and deaths are considered preventable. For this reason, it is vital that you participate in recommended screenings. Colon cancer may be curable, if detected and treated early.