

Skin Cancer: how to check yourself and protect yourself



With long summer days ahead, it's important to enjoy the great outdoors safely since exposure to the sun's rays can lead to skin cancer. The rates for melanoma have continued to rise the last 30 years — it is estimated that in the U.S. in 2019, approximately 96,480 cases will be diagnosed and 7,230 people will die from this serious form of skin cancer.

Be sun smart.

Here are three tips to protect the skin you're in while soaking up the summer sun.



Cover up

Wear clothing that covers your arms and legs, a wide-brimmed hat to protect your scalp, face and ears, and sunglasses that shield your eyes from UVA and UVB rays. Lather up exposed skin with water-resistant sunscreen with SPF of 15 or higher, even on cloudy days.



Seek shade

The sun's rays are the most hazardous for UV exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., so plan your outdoor activities early in the morning or late in the afternoon. If you are outdoors when the sun is most powerful, find a shady spot under a tree or umbrella.



Check your skin

Perform a regular self-exam, ideally once a month, to spot changes in your skin. Report any unusual or changing moles, freckles or skin spots to your health care provider. Also, talk to your doctor about whether you're at increased risk of skin cancer.

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