

Before You Head Out To Spring Break, Take A Moment To Learn About The Risks and Ways To Avoid Skin Cancer

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What is Skin Cancer?

You might think that people your age do not get skin cancer, but you'd be wrong. Skin cancer can strike at any age, but what is skin cancer? Skin cancer is a cancer that effects the outermost layer of your skin, called the Epidermis. Skin cancer can come in many forms, but the most common types are Basal Cell Carcinoma, Solar Keratosis, and Squamous Carcinoma. Melanoma is a less common but often more lethal form of skin cancer.

Risk Factors

- **Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays:** Both sunlight and tanning beds are sources of these rays.
- **Possessing lighter skin:** People of lighter skin tones are more at risk of developing a skin cancer.
- **Weakened Immune System:** Individuals with a weakened immune system are at greater risk of many diseases, including skin cancer.
- **Moles:** The appearance of many moles may be an indicator of higher skin cancer risk.
- **Chemical Exposure:** Being exposed to large amounts of arsenic chemicals can increase skin cancer risk.
- **Radiation Treatment:** People who have had radiation treatment are at a higher risk of developing skin cancer.

Prevention

Prevention is always the best treatment, and luckily there are several things you can do to decrease your skin cancer risk.

- **Seek Shade:** When you are enjoying your sunny days, always remember to avoid direct sunlight when possible.
- **Avoid Tanning Beds/Sunbathing:** Despite what some tanning salons may tell you, **NO** amount of tanning bed usage or sunbathing is safe. That nice brown tan you get from the salon is actually skin damage that raises your risk of skin cancer.
- **Use Sunscreen/Protective Clothing:** Using a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a SPF of 30 is the best skin protection technique. Wearing clothing that covers the neck, arms, and body also reduce sun damage.

Get Screened!

Early screening for skin cancer has been shown to reduce the fatality rates of those with skin cancer.

Don't wait, visit your dermatologist and receive your early screening. Its fast, easy, non-invasive, and may save your life!