Recommended Screening Guidelines for Skin Cancer

How to Lower Your Skin Cancer Risk

More than 90 percent of all skin cancer is caused by over exposure to the sun. The UVB rays, burning rays, of the sun are considered the main cause of skin cancer but the UVA rays, aging rays, also add to the damage by promoting skin cancer, wrinkling, and premature aging.

• Avoid the sun between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm when the rays are the strongest.
• Use a broad spectrum sunscreen product that provides both UVA and UVB Protection. Sunscreen should have a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or greater.
• Apply sunscreen 20-30 minutes before going outside. One ounce of sunscreen is the recommended amount.
• Reapply sunscreen roughly every 2 hours or after swimming or sweating.
• Use a lip balm with an SPF 30 on lips and re-apply often.
• Wear protective clothing such as wide brim hats, sunglasses, tightly woven long-sleeved shirts, or pants to reduce sun exposure.
• Protect your children from the sun and teach them sun safety.
• Avoid using tanning beds.
• Artificial tanning lotions are a safe alternative to tanning.

Possible Signs/Symptoms of Skin Cancer

There are three major types of skin cancer:

1. Basal Cell Carcinoma is the most common form of skin cancer. It may appear as:
   • A flesh colored bump or nodule
   • It may bleed, heal, then bleed again
   • Common sites include head, neck, or hand

2. Squamous Cell Carcinoma is the second most common form of skin cancer. It may appear as:
   • A bump or red scaly patch
   • Common sites include the ear, face, lip, and mouth

3. Malignant Melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer. It may:
   • Arise from or near a mole
   • The color may include streaks of tan, brown, black, red, white, and blue
   • The size may become larger than a pencil eraser
   • Common sites include the upper back, torso, lower legs, head, or neck

Skin Self Exam

Monthly examination of your skin could be useful in the early detection of skin cancer. To perform a self-exam, the American Academy of Dermatology recommends the following:

1. Remove all your clothing and have good lighting available.

2. Examine your body: front and back right and left sides with arms raised

3. Bend elbows and check: forearms upper arms palms of hands

4. Check the the backs of: your legs feet spaces between toes soles of your feet

5. Using a hand mirror, check the back of: your neck your scalp

6. Using a hand mirror, check: your back buttocks vaginal and rectal areas

Make a note of where your moles, freckles, blemishes, and other markings are located and what they look like.

Report changes in the size, shape, or color of an area or development of new characteristics such as repeated bleeding, itching, or soreness that does not go away.

In addition, talk to your healthcare provider about a skin examination as part of your annual health evaluation.

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Learning the ABCDE’s of Moles and Melanoma

A key to Melanoma is to catch it early. While completing your skin self exam learn to watch for the following:

A. Asymmetry
   One half of the area does not match the other half. (Common moles are generally symmetrical)

B. Border
   The border or edge of the area is uneven, ragged or scalloped. (Common moles have even borders)

C. Color
   The color of the area is not uniform. Look for varied shades of brown, tan or black. Red, white or blue may also appear. (Common moles are generally a single shade of brown)

D. Diameter
   The width becomes larger than the size of a pencil eraser. Any growth of a mole should be of concern.

E. Evolving
   The mole or lesion is changing in shape, size or color.

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Who is at Greater Risk for Developing Melanoma (Skin Cancer)?

Melanoma can affect people of every race and ethnic group, but people with the following characteristics are at an increased risk:

- Fair colored skin that burns or blisters easily
- Blond or red hair
- Blue, green, or gray eyes
- Excessive sun exposure during childhood and teen years, blistering and sunburns before age 20
- Family history of melanoma
- More than 100 moles, or 50 if you are under age 20

The Dangers of Indoor Tanning

The incidence of melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, is on the rise nationally and locally. According to the American Academy of Dermatology, melanoma is now the most common form of cancer for people aged 25-29 and the second most common cancer for young adults between the ages of 15-29.

Ultraviolet radiation (UVA and UVB rays) from the sun and tanning beds is a known risk factor for the development of skin cancer.

- The World Health Organization’s International Agency for Cancer Research declared radiation from tanning devices as “carcinogenic” or cancer causing to humans. Other agents with this same rating include cigarettes, plutonium and mustard gas.
- According to the American Academy of Dermatology, people that use tanning beds before the age of 35 have a 59% increased risk for melanoma. Excessive exposure to UV radiation from indoor tanning devices can also lead to premature aging of the skin, damage to the eye, and suppression of the immune system.

To reduce your risk of skin cancer, follow the recommendations outlined in this brochure.

What Is a Mammogram?

A Mammogram is an x-ray of the inside of the breast. The test is completed by pressing the breasts between 2 plates and is performed by a trained technologist. A screening Mammogram consists of 2 pictures of each breast. For some women, the doctor may order a diagnostic mammogram. A diagnostic mammogram requires additional pictures of the breast tissue for the Radiologist to review. The complete procedure takes only a few minutes and the only preparation for the exam is not using powders, deodorants or creams on the underarms or breast prior to the test.

Where Can I Get a Mammogram?

When choosing a location to get your Mammogram make sure it is a certified by the American College of Radiology. There are a number of mammography sites in McLean County. The sites in Bloomington/Normal include:

- The Women’s Center at Advocate BroMenn Medical Center 309-268-5705
- OSF St. Joseph Medical Center 309-661-5160
- Gale Keeran Center for Women 309-452-9001
- OSF SJMC College Ave. Imaging Services 309-661-5160

Mammography Financial Assistance

Financial assistance to cover the cost of a Mammogram may be available for women who have no insurance coverage or can not meet a high insurance deductible due to financial hardship.

For further information about available assistance, please contact the Community Cancer Center at 309-451-8500.

Possible Signs/Symptoms of Breast Cancer

- A lump in the breast.
- Any change in the nipple.
- Any discharge from the nipple.
- Skin Swelling: A portion of the skin on the breast has the appearance of an orange peel or is red in color.
- Dimpling or puckering of the skin on the breast.

Any woman who develops possible signs or symptoms of breast cancer should see her healthcare provider as soon as possible.

Recommendations That May Lower Your Risk for Breast Cancer

- Eat a balanced low fat diet which includes whole grains and 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Consider breast cancer risks associated with hormone replacement therapy.
- Do not smoke.

Breast Health Navigator

The Breast Health Navigator, a specially trained registered nurse, is available to help women with questions regarding these screening recommendations or other breast health concerns. To speak with the navigator, please contact the Community Cancer Center at 309-451-2216.