



SKIN CANCER/SUN SAFETY FACTS

"Because of the likely link between severe sun burns in childhood and greatly increased risk of melanoma later in life. Children, in particular, should be protected from the sun"

Skin Cancer rates are rising and solar/UV exposure to children is a leading contributor. The experts state that "90% of skin cancers can be prevented by staying safe in the sun. Staying in the shade is one of the best ways to be safe in the sun."

Shade is the best preventative, and trees, buildings, or Sun Veil canopies can provide it. Regardless of the source, insist that the facilities your children play at provide shade. Express your concerns to your schools, Park and Recreation Departments and Athletic Facilities! Insist that playgrounds, bleachers, dugouts, picnic areas, and general gathering areas be shaded!

Listed below are the latest "Skin Cancer / Sun Safety Facts" compiled from the leading health authorities in the U.S.

- Approximately 1 out of every 5 children in the United States today will grow up to have some form of skin cancer.
- Just one blistering sunburn before the age of 18 may double the risk of eventually developing melanoma (a life-threatening type of skin cancer) later in life.
- Approximately 25% of children under 6 years of age, and approximately 50% of children under 13 years of age have experienced at least one painful sunburn.
- About 80% of a person's total lifetime UV exposure occurs in the first 18 years of life.
- It can take less than 10 minutes for a child's unprotected skin to sunburn.
- Approximately 70% of American adults do not protect themselves from the sun's dangerous rays.
- Skin cancer is one of only two forms of cancer whose incident rates are increasing, rather than decreasing, in the United States.
- Skin cancer is by far the most common cancer in the United States with more than one million new cases diagnosed each year.
- Melanoma cases have nearly doubled in the United States in the past two decades.
- Most skin cancers are caused by over exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays.
- Over 90% of skin cancers can be prevented by staying safe in the sun. Staying in the shade is one of the best ways to be safe in the sun.
- One American dies every hour from skin cancer.
- Half of all new cancers are skin cancers.
- 47,700 Americans will be diagnosed with melanoma this year and 7,700 of them will die from the disease.
- 1,900 Americans will die this year from non-melanoma skin cancers.
- In 1930 your risk of developing melanoma was 1:1500 people. Today it is 1:75.
- Reducing sunburn is the single most preventable risk factor for melanoma.
- 85% of sunlight can reflect off of sand, concrete, water and snow.
- Up to 80% of UV rays can penetrate through clouds.

- The average age of diagnosis for melanoma is 52.
- UV intensity increases about 4% for every 1000 feet you go up in elevation.
- Exposure to UV radiation can decrease the effectiveness of the immune system.
- 60% of daily UVB reaches the earth's surface between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Because of the likely link between severe sunburns in childhood and greatly increased risk of melanoma later in life, children, in particular, should be protected from the sun.

Sources: American Academy of Dermatology, American Cancer Society, AMC Cancer Research Center, Boston University Medical Center, National Institutes of Health, National Coalition for Skin Cancer Prevention, Australian Cancer Society, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Sun Protection Association

Skin Cancer Facts

- There are over 1,000,000 new cases of skin cancer each year in the U.S.
- An estimated 10,000 Americans will die from skin cancer this year.
- It is the most common cancer in the U.S.
- One in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.
- One American dies every hour from skin cancer.
- Most skin cancer is preventable.
- Most skin cancers are caused by over exposure to the sun's UVA and UVB radiation.
- Because of the likely link between severe sunburns in childhood and greatly increased risk of melanoma later in life, children, in particular, should be protected from the sun.
- Sun safety (in order of importance) = limiting time in the sun (includes seeking shade), wearing protective clothing, and using sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or more.

Research Findings

- Stern et al have estimated that up to 80% of a person's cumulative lifetime sun exposure occurs before the age of 18. (Stern RS, Weinstein MC, Baker SG. (1986). Risk reduction for non-melanoma skin cancer with childhood sunscreen use. Arch Dermatology, 11:304-309.)
- With over one million new cases each year and annual increases of 4%, skin cancer has reached epidemic proportions in the U.S. (American Cancer Society, 1998).
- As few as two severe blistering sunburns before age 20 may double the risk developing melanoma later in life (Weinstock M, Colditz G, Willett W, Stampfer M, Bronstein B, Mihm M, et al. (1989). Nonfamilial cutaneous melanoma incidence in women associated with sun exposure before 20.)

Helpful Websites

- American Cancer Society www.cancer.org
- National Cancer Institute www.nci.nih.gov
- American Academy of Dermatology www.aad.org
- AMC Cancer Research Center www.amc.org
- Centers for Disease Control www.cdc.gov
- Environmental Protection Agency www.epa.gov