

# In Your Hands

*preventing skin cancer*



## Did you know that skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States?

The two most common types of skin cancer – basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas – are highly curable. Melanoma, the third most common skin cancer, is more dangerous and causes the most deaths. Skin cancer is typically caused by exposure to sunlight.

### What puts me at risk for developing skin cancer?

#### Sunlight

Your risk of developing skin cancer increases with exposure to sunlight. If you live and work in areas with year-round bright sunlight, or spend a lot of time outdoors without protective clothing or sunscreen, you are at greater risk.

#### Age

Your risk of skin cancer goes up as you get older because you have been exposed to the sun for a longer time. But younger people can also develop skin cancer, especially if they spend long hours unprotected in the hot sun. If you had frequent sunburns as a child, you are at greater risk for some types of skin cancer.

#### Family or personal history

If you have a parent or sibling with skin cancer and/or have been diagnosed with skin cancer before, you are at greater risk of developing skin cancer.

#### Pesticides

Working around pesticides can create a higher risk for developing skin cancer.

#### Moles

Most moles are harmless and will never develop into cancer, but having a large number of moles may increase the risk for developing melanoma.

## What are some symptoms of skin cancer?

The symptoms of skin cancer can vary, sometimes developing from an unusual mole, skin growth, bump, or sore that doesn't go away. Look at your skin and if you see a dark spot that is getting bigger or changing shape or color, be sure to let your doctor know.

## How can I prevent skin cancer?

You can prevent skin cancer following these simple steps:

### Wear clothing that keeps you covered!

The more skin you cover, the better. Wear long-sleeve shirts, pants, and wide-brimmed hats to help protect your skin.



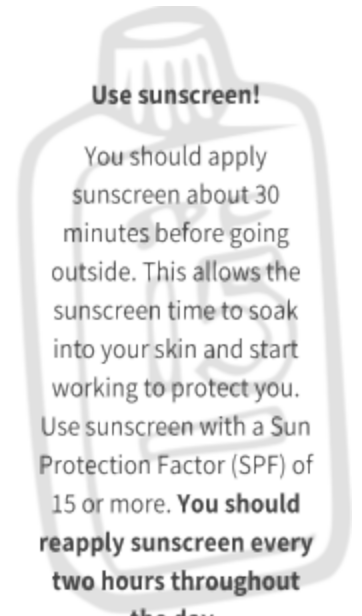
### Wear sunglasses!

The skin around your eyes is very sensitive to sunlight. Wrap-around sunglasses will protect your eyes and skin.



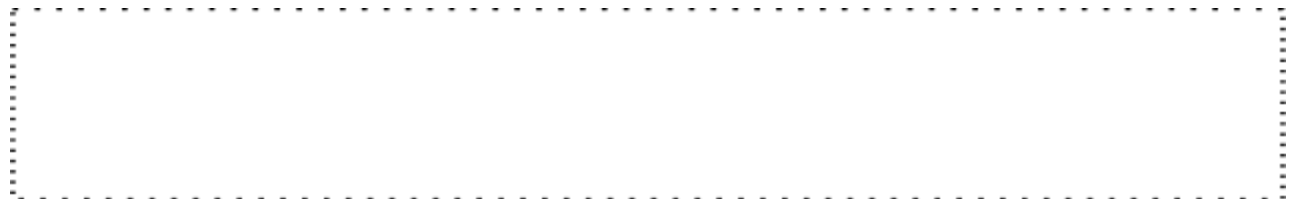
### Use sunscreen!

You should apply sunscreen about 30 minutes before going outside. This allows the sunscreen time to soak into your skin and start working to protect you. Use sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or more. **You should reapply sunscreen every two hours throughout the day.**



## What should I do if I notice any changes to my skin?

It's important to pay attention to your skin. If you notice any changes, including bumps or sores that don't go away or moles that grow or change shape or color, you should visit your local health center. Tell your healthcare provider about all of the different concerns you have about your skin. You can find out more at:



*HRSA Disclaimer: This publication is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS) under cooperative agreement number U30CS22741 for \$447,333.00 with 0% of the total NCA project financed with non-federal sources. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsement be inferred by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government.*

*This fact sheet uses information from the American Academy of Dermatology. <https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/skin-cancer>*

**Important!**  
*Having darker skin does not protect you from skin cancer. Men are 2 to -3 times more likely than women to develop skin cancer.*