

Protect yourself against skin cancer

When Little Orphan Annie sang “The Sun’ll Come Out Tomorrow,” she, of course, didn’t intend it to be a stern warning to her fellow orphans and Daddy Warbucks to put on their sunscreen – but it should’ve been. After all, more than 90 percent of all skin cancers are caused by sun exposure.¹ You should be familiar with the dangers of the sun or the warning signs of skin cancer. It could save your life.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States, but it is also one of the most preventable.² Taking these simple steps to protect yourself can significantly reduce your risk of skin cancer:¹

- 1. Evaluate your risk.** While everyone is at risk for sun damage, certain groups of people are at a greater risk for developing skin cancer. Factors that lead to an increased risk include skin type, time spent outdoors, where you live, and personal and family history.¹
- 2. Protect yourself.** The best way to prevent skin cancer is to avoid the sun. Try to stay inside or in the shade between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when ultraviolet rays are the strongest and most damaging. Wear sunscreen that offers UVA and UVB protection, with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher every time you go outside. Be sure to reapply sunscreen at least every two hours and whenever you have perspired heavily, gone swimming or dried off with a towel – even if your sunscreen is waterproof. And wear protective clothing, including a wide-brimmed hat and wraparound sunglasses that block as close to 100 percent of UVA and UVB rays as possible.^{2,3}
- 3. Know the warning signs.** The good news is that skin cancer is curable, particularly when detected early. Signs of a problem include:
 - Asymmetry, uneven borders, more than one color, large diameter, or changes to moles – the ABCDEs of melanoma, the most dangerous form of skin cancer
 - An open sore that does not heal for three or more weeks
 - A red, irritated patch on the skin
 - A shiny bump of any color

The sun’ll come up tomorrow – and now you know how to protect yourself!



Certain factual or statistical information was derived from the following sources:

¹skincancer.org (Accessed March 16, 2010)

²cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/ (Accessed March 16, 2010)

³American Academy of Dermatology, Overexposure to the Sun Can Happen Indoors and Outdoors: yourskinandsun.com/indoorsun.html (Accessed March 16, 2010)

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