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FLORIDA HEALTH ENCOURAGES SUN SAFETY DURING MELANOMA/SKIN CANCER DETECTION AND PREVENTION MONTH



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Tallahassee, Fla.—The Florida Department of Health recognizes May as National Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention month and reminds residents and visitors to protect themselves from the most common form of cancer in the U.S. Although it is common, skin cancer is also preventable and highly treatable when detected early.

“Spending time outdoors not only allows you to enjoy Florida’s natural beauty, it can also improve your overall health and wellness,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary Dr. Celeste Philip. “We are incredibly fortunate to live in the Sunshine State, but we should all use sun protection like broad spectrum sunscreen, hats and sunglasses whenever we’re outside in order to reduce our risk of skin cancer or melanoma.”

Two common types of skin cancer—basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas—are curable. Melanoma is less common but is more dangerous and can sometimes result in death. These three types of skin cancer are mostly caused by overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) light.

The most common sign of skin cancer is a change in the skin—a new mole or a change in an existing mole, or a sore that doesn’t heal. Melanoma can be indicated by the following signs:

- An irregularly shaped mole or spot;
- A mole or spot with uneven color;
- A mole that is larger than a pea; or
- Changes in an existing mole or spot.

If you notice changes in your skin, you should consult with your health care provider.

There are many ways to reduce your risk of skin cancer. Parents should be vigilant in making sure their children avoid sunburns and overexposure to the sun. The department recommends the following tips to enjoy the Florida sunshine safely:

- Always use broad spectrum (blocks UVA and UVB rays) sunscreen with an SPF higher than 15 if you are outside, and reapply every two hours or after contact with water;
- Seek shade when the sun is strongest;
- Wear hats and other protective clothing;
- Wear sunglasses that block UVA and UVB rays; and
- Avoid indoor tanning.

Protecting yourself from harmful UV light is important year-round, especially in Florida. Make sure you are protecting yourself and your loved ones from this common but potentially serious type of cancer.

For more information about skin cancer and how you can reduce your risk, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/>

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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