

## SHAC NEWSLETTER

Student Health and Counseling Center (SHAC)

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## UV SAFETY MONTH

### July is UV Safety Month

The skin is the body's largest organ. It has many functions, including protecting us against heat, sunlight, injury, and infection. The harmful ultraviolet rays from the sun and indoor tanning can cause skin cancer and other complications, such as a weakened immune system, age spots, wrinkles, and leathery skin.

### How do I protect myself from UV rays? *Slip! Slop! Slap! ® and Wrap!*

- **Slip on a shirt!** When you are out in the sun, wear clothing to cover as much skin as possible.
- **Slop on sunscreen!** It protects you from the sun's UV rays; however, it does not block all UV rays.
  - Sun protection factor (SPF) is the level of protection the sunscreen provides against UVB rays. A higher SPF number means more UVB protection.
  - Sunscreen needs to be reapplied at least every 2 hours to maintain protection
- **Slap on a hat!** A hat with at least a 2- to 3-inch brim all around is ideal for sun protection.
- **Wrap on sunglasses!** UV rays can penetrate the structures of your eyes and cause cell damage. The ideal sunglasses should block 99% to 100% of UVA and UVB rays.

### Avoid tanning beds and sun lamps

Tanning lamps give out UVA and UVB rays. Tanning bed use has been linked with an increased risk of melanoma; especially if it's started before a person is 30.

### Sun exposure and Vitamin D

Whenever possible, it is better to get vitamin D from your diet or vitamin supplements rather than from sun exposure because they do not increase risk of skin cancer.

## SKIN CANCER

### How many people get skin cancer?

Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers. About 3.5 million cases of basal and squamous cell skin cancer are diagnosed in the US each year. Melanoma, which is a more dangerous type of skin cancer accounts for more than 73,000 cases this year.

### What are the different types of skin cancers?

Most basal and squamous cell cancers develop on sun-exposed areas of the skin, such as the face, ears, neck lips, and the backs of the hands.

**Basal cell cancers** grow slowly, and rarely spread to other parts of the body, while **squamous cell cancers** are more likely to grow into deeper layers of skin and spread.

**Melanoma** is a cancer that begins in the melanocytes, the cells that make the pigment known as melanin, which gives skin its color. Melanoma is almost always curable when it's found in the early stages. It is much more likely to grow and spread to other parts of the body, where it can be hard to treat.

### What are the risk factors for skin cancer?

- Too much exposure to UV radiation
- Pale skin (easily sunburned, natural red or blond hair)
- Family history of skin cancers

### ABCDE's of skin cancer detection:

**Asymmetry:** One half does not match the other half

**Border:** The edges are ragged, notched, or blurred

**Color:** A mole has several colors, or it gains or loses color

**Diameter (size):** A mole grows larger than a pencil eraser

**Evolution:** A skin lesion changes shape, color, size or texture

[Click here](#) to take a quiz about skin cancer

Source:  
<http://www.foh.hhs.gov/calendar/july.html>

Source:  
<http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/sunanduvexposure/skin-cancer-facts>