

SUMMER SKIN CANCER AND WRINKLE PREVENTION

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Thousands of Americans develop skin cancers each year. Most of the cases are related to excess sun exposure. These tumors don't usually appear immediately after sun exposure, but often develop years later.

Skin cancers can occur anywhere on the human body, but develop most frequently on the face. Skin cancer types are basal cell (slow growing), squamous cell (faster growing and can more readily spread), and melanoma (the pigmented type that is very dangerous).

Skin cancers can disfigure the face, eyelids, ears, lips, cheeks, or nose, etc. This is something most people find hard to worry about when they are young and working on that tan, but the risk of disfigurement is real. The likelihood of developing a skin cancer is directly related to the amount of sun exposure, and the skin damage can be cumulative. Tumors become more likely after repeated tanning or sun burns. What makes sun exposure even more of a problem is that even if a person does not develop a skin cancer, excess sun exposure can cause serious wrinkling.

The risk of skin cancers and wrinkling is lessened by protecting the skin from excess sun exposure. The first line of defense is to use sun screen and a hat. If a person knows they are going to be exposed to a lot of sunlight when going to play golf, to garden, or spend some time on the beach.....they might consider going ahead and taking a hat, clothing to cover with after an hour or so in the sun, and a good tube of SPF 30 or better sun screen. However, even riding in the car can incur excess sun exposure on the side of the face next to the windshield.

For those who have already received several years of sun damage, early skin changes like pigmented spots, rough skin patches, wrinkles or crusted areas that bleed might become an issue. Once an outright skin cancer is determined not to be present there are things one can do to reverse the damage and improve the skin.

Medical grade skin exfoliation creams can help stimulate the skin to regenerate and replace the damaged skin with smoother, healthier surface

cells. Sometimes this is all that is needed. However, severely damaged skin may require skin peels or laser treatments.

There are many types of skin peels and many types of lasers. A specialist can make recommendations as to what type of peel or laser might best help the condition in question.

Year Round Skin Health Plan:

- Prevention: sunscreen, hat
- Treatment of non cancerous skin changes like pigmented spots or wrinkles: medical grade skin exfoliation & hydration, peels, lasers
- Skin cancers: non healing, ulcerated, bleeding or pigmented lesions should be evaluated by your doctor.

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