

## Melanoma/Skin Cancer Prevention

### What is melanoma?

Melanoma is a kind of skin cancer. It is not as common as other types of skin cancer, but it is the most serious.

Melanoma can affect your skin only, or it may spread to your organs and bones. As with other cancers, treatment for melanoma works best when the cancer is found early.

This topic is about melanoma that occurs in the skin. It does not cover melanoma that occurs in the eye or in any other part of the body besides the skin.

### What causes melanoma?

You can get melanoma by spending too much time in the sun. Too much sun exposure causes normal skin cells to become abnormal. These abnormal cells quickly grow out of control and attack the tissues around them.



Melanoma tends to run in families. Other things in your family background can increase your chances of getting the disease. For example, you may have abnormal, or atypical, moles. Atypical moles may fade into the skin and have a flat part that is level with the skin. They may be smooth or slightly scaly, or they may look rough and “pebbly.” Having many atypical moles increases your risk of melanoma. Also, it may be a sign that melanoma runs in your family.

### What are the symptoms?

The main sign of melanoma is a change in a mole or other skin growth, such as a birthmark. Any change in the shape, size or color of a mole may be a sign of melanoma.

Melanoma may look like a flat, brown or black mole that has un-

even edges. Melanomas usually have an irregular or asymmetrical shape. This means that one half of the mole doesn't match the other half. Melanoma moles or marks may be any size, but they are usually 6 mm (0.25 in.) or larger.

Unlike a normal mole or mark, a melanoma can:

- Change color, size, or the shape of its border.
- Be lumpy or rounded.
- Become crusty, ooze, or bleed.

### How is melanoma diagnosed?

Your doctor will check your skin to look for melanoma. If your doctor thinks you have melanoma, he or she will remove a sample of tissue from the area around the melanoma (biopsy). Another doctor, called a pathologist, will look at the tissue to check for cancer cells.

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## Melanoma/Skin Cancer Prevention (Continued)

If your biopsy shows melanoma, you may need to have more tests to find out if it has spread to your lymph nodes.

### How is it treated?

The most common treatment is surgery to remove the melanoma. That is all the treatment that you may need for early-stage melanomas that have not spread to other parts of your body.

After surgery, your doctor will set up a schedule of frequent check-ups that will happen less often as time goes on. Your doctor will talk with you about how you can lower

your chances of having another melanoma.

### Can you prevent melanoma?

The best way to prevent all kinds of skin cancer, including melanoma, is to protect yourself whenever you are out in the sun. It's important to avoid exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays.

- Try to stay out of the sun during the middle of the day (from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).
- Wear protective clothes when you are outside, such as a hat that shades your face, a long-sleeved shirt, and long pants.
- Get in the habit of using sunscreen every day. Your sun-

screen should have an SPF of at least 15. Look for a sunscreen that protects against both types of UV radiation in the sun's rays-UVA and UVB.

- Use a higher SPF when you are at higher elevations.
- Avoid sunbathing and tanning salons.

Ask your doctor to check your skin during regular physical exams or at least once a year. Even though the biggest cause of melanoma is spending too much time in the sun, it can be found on parts of your body that never see the sun.

Source: webmd.com

## New Sunscreen Product Labels to Debut this Summer

As millions of Americans prepare to enjoy the great outdoors this summer, the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention wants to help consumers understand new labeling rules on sunscreen products.

The National Council urges consumers to choose sunscreen products that offer Broad Spectrum protection, and have an SPF of 30 or higher. Under the new labeling, recently announced by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA), sunscreens that protect against both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays can be labeled "Broad Spectrum." Both UVA and UVB radiation contribute

to the sun's damaging effects, which include sunburn, skin cancer, and premature skin aging.

- Sunscreen products that meet the criteria for being called Broad Spectrum, and have an SPF of 15 or higher, may state that they reduce the risk of skin cancer and early skin aging, when used as directed.
- Products that have SPF values between 2 and 14 may be labeled as Broad Spectrum if they protect against both UVA and UVB, but only products that are labeled both as Broad Spectrum with

SPF values of 15 or higher can make the claim about lowering risk of skin cancer.

- Any product that is not Broad Spectrum, or that is Broad Spectrum but has an SPF between 2 to 14, will be required to have a warning stating that the product has not been shown to help prevent skin cancer or early skin aging.

For more information on how to protect yourself from skin cancer, visit the National Council's site at [www.SkinCancerPrevention.org](http://www.SkinCancerPrevention.org).

## 2013 CHP Educational Training

The 2013 CHP Educational Training is underway. You don't want to miss out on this opportunity to learn about the following topics:

Banded rate formula that will be utilized for the 2014 renewal, loss ratios, understanding the new SBCs and other healthcare reform regulations, costs of procedures, the processing of CDL physicals, wisdom teeth, Anthem's specialty pharmacy and other tips to assist members in becoming wiser health consumers.

To find out when the CHP Training is available at your entity, check with your CHP contact.