



WELLNESS WORKSHEET 94

Skin Cancer Prevention

Part I. Skin Cancer Risk Assessment

Skin cancer is the most common cancer of all when cases of the highly curable forms are included in the count. Your risk of skin cancer from the ultraviolet radiation in sunlight depends on several factors. Take the quiz below to see how sensitive you are. The higher your UV-risk score, the greater your risk of skin cancer—and the greater your need to take precautions against too much sun.

Score 1 point for each true statement:

- | | |
|---|--|
| _____ 1. I have blond or red hair. | _____ 7. I have a family history of skin cancer. |
| _____ 2. I have light-colored eyes (blue, gray, green). | _____ 8. I work outdoors. |
| _____ 3. I freckle easily. | _____ 9. I spend a lot of time in outdoor activities. |
| _____ 4. I have many moles. | _____ 10. I like to spend as much time in the sun as I can. |
| _____ 5. I had two or more blistering sunburns as a child. | _____ 11. I sometimes go to a tanning parlor or use a sunlamp. |
| _____ 6. I spent lots of time in a tropical climate as a child. | _____ Total score |

Score Risk of skin cancer from UV radiation

0	Low
1–3	Moderate
4–7	High
8–11	Very high

Part II. Skin Cancer Prevention

Fill in the details for a recent or typical day in which you were outdoors in the sun for a significant period of time. Compare your typical behavior with the recommendations for skin cancer prevention.

Time of day: _____ Total duration of exposure: _____

Recommendation: Avoid exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

UV index for the day: _____ (UV index ratings are usually available from the newspaper, the local weather bureau, or the NOAA Web site: http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/stratosphere/uv_index.)

Recommendation: Take special care on days with a rating of 5 or more.

Clothing worn (describe): _____

Recommendation: Wear long-sleeved shirts made of tightly woven cotton fabric, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses with UV protection, and use a lip balm with UV protection.

(over)

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Sunscreen used? (Y/N) _____ Type and SPF rating: _____

Recommendation: Use a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher. Look for sunscreens that contain ingredients that block both UVA and UVB rays.

Sunscreen applied _____ minutes before sun exposure.

Recommendation: Apply 30–45 minutes prior to sun exposure.

Amount of sunscreen applied: _____ ounces (Approximate by comparing the amount you applied with the amount in the full container.)

Recommendation: It takes about 1 ounce to cover an adult in a swimsuit. Many bottles or tubes of sunscreen contain a total of 4 ounces, so 1 ounce would be one-quarter of a typical bottle.

How did your behavior compare with the recommendations? The next time you plan to spend a day outdoors, use this worksheet to help maximize your cancer prevention behavior.

Part III. Skin Cancer Self-Exam

The American Cancer Society recommends taking 5 to 10 minutes for a skin self-exam at least once a month. The best time to do a self-exam is usually after a bath or shower. Use a full-length mirror and a hand held mirror so that you can check your entire body for moles, blemishes, and birthmarks. The Society recommends the following “Down and Back” procedure. Check off each step as you perform a self-exam.

- _____ 1. While standing, examine your face, chest, and arms (both sides of the arms) and belly.
- _____ 2. Then, sit down to look at the front surfaces of your legs and feet. Use the mirror to examine the backs of your legs and check out the soles of your feet.
- _____ 3. Stand up again and use the mirror to inspect your buttocks and upper back. Use the hand mirror to examine the back of your neck and your scalp. Part your hair or use a blow dryer to lift your hair and give you a close look at your scalp.

The American Cancer Society advises you to become familiar with birthmarks, moles, and blemishes so that you know what they look like and can identify any changes in them. Signs to look for are changes in size, texture, shape, and color of blemishes or a sore that does not heal.