

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information contact:

Tara Solomon-Smith

Family and Community Wellness Agent, Southwind Extension District

[tsolomon@ksu.edu](mailto:tsolomon@ksu.edu), 620-244-3826

## **Fun in the Sun—But Stay Safe!**

Enjoying time outdoors is important for our health and well-being, but it's just as important to protect your skin while you're at it. Skin cancer is the most common cancer worldwide, and the statistics are eye-opening: **1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime**, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation. It affects people of all ages, skin tones, and genders. Melanoma, the most dangerous form, claims the lives of nearly 20 Americans every day.

Whether you're working or playing outside, make sun safety part of your daily routine to reduce the risk of skin damage, premature aging, and skin cancer.

### **Sunscreen Tips**

- Choose broad spectrum, water resistant 30 SPF sunscreen. Broad spectrum sunscreen will help protect from UVB and UVA rays. The Sun Protection Factor (SPF) indicates how well a sunscreen protects against sunburn.
- Do not use expired sunscreen. If you're using enough sunscreen daily and when in the sun, you should not have any trouble utilizing a tube or can before it has expired.
- Use enough sunscreen to cover all exposed areas. Focus on the face, nose, ears, shoulders, feet, hands, back, arms, and even the back of your knees. Wide brimmed hats are encouraged, but if you're not wearing a hat, be sure to apply sunscreen to your scalp.
- Apply sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before going outdoors. It takes time for your skin to absorb the sunscreen to protect you.
- Reapply sunscreen at least every 2 hours. When swimming, sweating, or drying off with a towel, apply more often. With each application, use at least a golf ball sized amount.
- Thoroughly rub in spray sunscreen. Simply spraying sunscreen on your body is not enough to ensure protection. Spray the sunscreen onto the body, out of wind, and rub in. Avoid inhaling spray sunscreen and do not spray the sunscreen near your face and mouth. Spray the sunscreen into your palm, then apply it to your face and ears.

### **Early Detection is Key for Skin Cancer**

You know your body best. By examining your skin monthly, and looking for anything new or unusual, you can catch potentially dangerous conditions when they are still treatable. When performing a full-body monthly self-exam, face the mirror and check your face, ears, neck, under breasts, chest, and belly. Check your underarms, both sides of your arms, tops and palms of hands, in between fingers, and under your fingernails. Utilize a hand mirror to look at hard to see

portions of your body. Wrap up your monthly self-exam by using a comb to part your hair to check your scalp. The American Cancer Society recommends specifically looking for:

- New, growing, or changing growth, a spot, or bump on the skin;
- A sore that bleeds and/or doesn't heal after several weeks;
- Rough or scaly red patches which may crust or bleed;
- Wart-like growths;
- A mole (or other spot on the skin) that's new or changing in size, shape, or color;
- A mole with an odd shape, irregular borders, or areas of different colors.

### **Next Steps**

- Perform a monthly self-examination and look for anything on your skin. Schedule an appointment and visit your doctor or dermatologist immediately if you notice anything new, changing, or unusual on your skin.
- Schedule your annual skin cancer check.
- Purchase or locate broad spectrum sunscreen, a wide brimmed hat, UV sunglasses, and long-sleeved shirts and pants and utilize when outdoors.
- Brainstorm how you can increase skin protection in your community. Does your local daycare or grade school have adequate shade or policies in place that encourage hats and sunscreen to be worn when youth are outdoors?

Information for this article comes from K-State Extension's *Protect Your Skin from the Sun* Fact Sheet. For more information contact Tara Solomon-Smith, [tsolomon@ksu.edu](mailto:tsolomon@ksu.edu), 620-244-3826.

# # #

**Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension  
Service**