Wake Forest™ School of Medicine

Women's Health Center of Excellence for Research, Leadership, Education

Fact Sheet

Skin Cancer

One of every five people in the United States will get skin cancer.

Most, but not all, skin cancers are caused by exposure to the sun.

A suntan **does not** help protect against skin cancer.

- Exposure to the sun can cause skin cancer even if you don't get a sunburn.
- People with fair skin, blond or red hair, and light-colored eyes are at especially high risk for skin cancer.
- People who have a family history of skin cancer are more likely to get skin cancer themselves.
- Fortunately, most skin cancers are easy to prevent.

How to Prevent Skin Cancer

- Stay out of the sun between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., (between 11:00 and 3:00 daylight savings time) when the sun's rays are strongest.
- Wear a hat, shirt, and long pants or skirt when outdoors to protect your skin from the sun.
- Before going outdoors: Use a sunscreen with a sun protection number of 15 or higher. Use sunscreen all year long.
- Watch out for reflected sunlight. The harmful rays of the sun can reflect off things like sand, cement, water, and snow.
- Be careful even on cloudy days. Most of the sun's rays reach the ground even through the clouds.
- Don't use tanning beds, reflectors, or sun lamps.

This information is general. If your doctor tells you something different, follow his or her instructions.

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For more information about women's health issues, stop by our Resource Center at 2000 West First Street, Piedmont Plaza II, 1st Floor, Winston Salem, NC 27104, visit our website at http://www.wakehealth.edu/WHCOE/ or contact us at (336) 713-4220.