

KNOW YOUR ABCD's

Warning Signs of Melanoma

A



ASYMMETRY

One half not exactly like the other

B



BORDER

Irregular, scalloped, or poorly defined

C



COLOR

Various colors in same mole

D



DIAMETER

Larger than a pencil eraser (6 mm)

Most importantly, be aware of CHANGE!
Examine your skin monthly and see your health care provider if you notice a change in a mole or a new mole and for yearly skin checks after age 40.

Visit SunGuard Man Online at
www.sunguardman.org

- Learn more about skin cancer prevention
- Play video games & enter contests
- See the cartoon Adventures of SunGuard Man
- Teachers! Visit the Teacher's Site to download the SunGuard Your Skin elementary/middle school curriculum and more educational resources.

*Coalition for Skin Cancer Prevention in Maryland
funded by the Maryland Department of Health
& Mental Hygiene*

Center for a
HealthyMaryland

an affiliate of **MedChi**,
The Maryland State Medical Society

1211 Cathedral Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-5516
410.539.0872 / 800.492.1056
www.healthymaryland.org
www.medchi.org

Cover photo credit: The Maryland Watermen's Association, Inc.



SunGuard Your Skin

COALITION FOR
SKIN CANCER
PREVENTION
IN MARYLAND



THE SUN: FRIEND OR FOE?

The sun makes life on earth possible. It gives us warmth and light. But within that warm sunlight is an invisible enemy: *ultraviolet radiation*.

Too much exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation damages the skin. This damage causes wrinkling, blotching, and leathering of the skin, which makes people appear old before their time.

The most dangerous effects of long term exposure to UV radiation are tanning and sunburns, which can lead to skin cancer.

WHAT ARE THE FACTS?

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Maryland. About 1,000 cases of the dangerous form of skin cancer, *melanoma*, will be diagnosed in Maryland this year.

Just one or two severe sunburns during childhood or adolescence doubles the chance of getting skin cancer later in life.

The good news is that skin cancer is the most preventable type of cancer. It can be prevented by avoiding sunburns.

You don't have to be very old to get skin cancer. Although skin cancer is often associated with people of advanced age, that is no longer the case with melanoma. About one in four people who develop melanoma are under the age of 40.

WHO IS AT RISK?

Everyone is at some risk for skin cancer. Although people with lighter skin tones are at greater risk, *people of all races and ethnic backgrounds are susceptible*.

In African-Americans melanoma may occur in lighter pigmented areas of the skin such as the palms, the soles, or under the nails. Although they are at less risk for developing melanoma, when it is diagnosed, it is often at a later stage.

Risk factors for skin cancer include

- light skin that freckles and burns easily
- naturally red, blond, or light brown hair
- blue, gray, or green eyes
- many moles, irregular moles, or large moles
- blood relatives who have had skin cancer
- a history of sun exposure during outdoor work or play
- a history of sunburns as a child or adolescent

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Protect yourself and your children by following these steps to SunGuard Your Skin:

- **Do Not Burn.** Avoid sun tanning and tanning beds. If you want to look tan use a sunless self-tanning product and use sunscreen too
- **Generously Apply Sunscreen** with SPF of at least 15 which provides broad-spectrum protection from both UVA and UVB rays. Re-apply every two hours and after swimming or sweating
- **Wear Protective Clothing** such as long-sleeved shirts, pants, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses with UV protection to prevent cataracts
- **Seek Shade** when appropriate, remembering that the sun's rays are the strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- **Use Extra Caution** near water, snow and sand as they reflect the damaging UV rays, increasing your chance of sunburn
- **Send Sunscreen** to school or camp with your children and encourage them to use it
- **Remember** to follow these suggestions even on cloudy days and in every season of the year