

# American Cancer Society Skin Cancer Prevention Activities

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. More than 3.5 million cases of basal and squamous cell skin cancer are diagnosed each year, while more than 76,000 people are diagnosed with melanoma, the deadliest forms of skin cancer.

Though the statistics are sobering, skin cancer actually is one of the most preventable forms of cancer. The American Cancer Society encourages people to take steps to help lower their risk of developing this disease.

## Slip! Slop! Slap!® and Wrap

The American Cancer Society's awareness campaign for skin cancer prevention promotes the slogan "Slip! Slop! Slap! and Wrap" which is a catch phrase that reminds people of the 4 key ways they can protect themselves from UV radiation:

- Slip on a shirt
- Slop on sunscreen
- Slap on a hat
- Wrap on sunglasses to protect your eyes and sensitive skin around them

The Society promotes this message through media and education activities, and is a core member of the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention, a collaborative group of more than 45 organizations dedicated to skin cancer prevention in the United States. This collaboration supports the Society's nationwide objective of improving behaviors that can prevent skin cancer, and being a trusted, unbiased source of cancer information.

## Don't Fry Day

[The National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention](#) has designated the Friday before Memorial Day as [Don't Fry Day™](#), an annual effort to raise awareness of skin cancer prevention. This initiative is designed to help people stay well by raising awareness about the steps they can take to prevent skin cancer. The American Cancer Society supports this initiative.

Key messages about Don't Fry Day include:

- The Friday before Memorial Day is Don't Fry Day. This year, go beyond sunscreen to protect your skin.
- Skin cancer is on the rise in the United States.
- There are many ways to protect your skin from harmful UV radiation, including seeking shade when you can, wearing protective clothing, generously applying sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher), and not letting your skin tan or burn.

- Use the UV Index forecast to help protect yourself from harmful UV exposure. (A higher UV Index on a scale from 1 to 11+ means more skin damaging UV radiation is reaching the earth.)

## Sun safety

Along with promoting Don't Fry Day, the Society recommends these sun safe behaviors for all people every day:

- Limit the amount of time you spend in direct sun, especially when the sun's rays are most intense, generally from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Wear protective clothing when you're out in the sun, including long sleeves; sunglasses; and a hat that shades your face, neck, and ears.
- Wear sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher on all skin that isn't covered.
- Protect your skin even on cool or cloudy days.

The American Cancer Society also promotes early detection of skin cancer in adults through regular skin self-exams, and an examination for skin cancer should be part of periodic health exams.

## Research into skin cancer prevention

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to working with policy makers to enact laws and policies that will advance the fight against cancer. Major focus areas include:

- Increased money for cancer research, prevention, early detection, and care
- Increased access to quality care, screening, and prevention services
- Reduced health disparities among the medically underserved

The Society's extramural grants program is the largest source of private, not-for-profit cancer research funds in the United States. Currently, 50 grants are funded for skin/melanoma cancer research totaling over \$25 million.

The American Cancer Society Intramural Research Department evaluates trends in incidence, mortality, risk factors, and patient care and provides descriptive cancer statistics in a number of publications. For example, in a study published in *Cancer* in 2009, researchers from the Society's Intramural Research Department reported that teens were still frequenting tanning beds, despite laws restricting tanning bed use in several states. Many are getting burned while doing so, raising their risk of developing skin cancer later in life.

Skin cancer rates have been increasing from year to year. This highlights the need to continue skin cancer prevention education, and work for policies and laws that help protect people and get everyone the screening and treatment they need.

## To learn more

It's not possible or practical to avoid sunlight completely, and it would be unwise to reduce your level of activity to avoid the outdoors — we know physical activity is important for good health. But too much sunlight can be harmful. The American Cancer Society will continue to educate and encourage people to take steps to be safe in the sun.

Please call 1-800-227-2345 or read [Skin Cancer Prevention and Early Detection](#) if you would like to learn how to protect yourself and your loved ones from skin cancer and get tips on how to find skin cancer as early as possible. We want to help you stay well.

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