How can I stay safe in the sun and protect my skin?

May 19, 2020 By Liz Highleyman

May is skin cancer and melanoma awareness month. As summer approaches, it's increasingly important to protect your skin from the sun. Skin cancer is by far the most common type of cancer in the United States, and the American Cancer Society estimates that about one in five Americans will develop this cancer in their lifetime. Melanoma is the most dangerous type. People with light skin are at highest risk, but people with dark skin can develop skin cancer too.

To stay safe in the sun, use a broad-spectrum sunscreen; SPF 50 offers the most protection. Wear long sleeves, a hat and UV-blocking sunglasses. Avoid the sun during the brightest part of the day, and remember—you can get too much exposure even on cloudy days and in the winter.

Examine your skin regularly. Signs that a mole could be malignant include asymmetrical shape, multiple colors, increasing size and itchiness or bleeding. See a dermatologist if you spot any unusual signs or symptoms.

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