**The Most Common Cancer in the US**

First, the bad news: according to the [**Skin Cancer Foundation**](https://www.skincancer.org/get-involved/skin-cancer-awareness-month), 5 million cases of skin cancer are reported annually. This makes skin cancer the most common type of cancer that Americans suffer. Now the good news: skin cancer is preventable.

The foundation reports: "About 90 percent of non-melanoma skin cancers and 85 percent of melanoma cases are associated with exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun. By raising awareness of the dangers of unprotected exposure and encouraging sun-safe habits, we can change behaviors and save lives."

Exercise good skin care every time you go out into the sun: apply [**sunscreen**](https://blog.skincancer.org/2019/01/07/how-to-read-a-sunscreen-label/) to exposed skin, wear a hat, seek shade and avoid being out during the hottest parts of the day (10 am-4 pm).

If you're confused about what sunscreen to buy, consider the Skin Cancer Foundation's recommendation: "Use a broad spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher every day. For extended outdoor activity, use a water-resistant, broad spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher."

**Take Sunburn Seriously**

While there was a time when people didn't worry so much about sunburn, that was not really a healthy mode of operation. Who wants to sit back and allow the largest organ of his or her body to cook in the sun? Each instance of sun burn is painful and uncomfortable. Plus, overtime, enduring regular sunburns can lead to bigger problems.

Dermatologist [**Dr. Jeffrey Brackeen**](https://www.skincancer.org/prevention/sunburn/five-ways-to-treat-a-sunburn), who is a member of The Skin Cancer Foundation, points out: "Your risk for melanoma doubles if you've had more than five sunburns."

**The Dangers of Melanoma**

Melanoma is the most dangerous form of skin cancer. The [**foundation**](https://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-information/melanoma) explains: "If melanoma is recognized and treated early, it is almost always curable, but if it is not, the cancer can advance and spread to other parts of the body, where it becomes hard to treat and can be fatal. While it is not the most common of the skin cancers, it causes the most deaths. An estimated 7,230 people will die of melanoma in 2019."

**The Most Common Type of Skin Cancer**

Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC) is the most common type of skin cancer. The [**foundation**](https://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-information/basal-cell-carcinoma) notes that nearly 4 million are diagnosed annually. This secures its status as the most frequently-occurring type of cancer. The foundation explains: "BCCs often look like open sores, red patches, pink growths, shiny bumps, or scars and are usually caused by a combination of cumulative and intense, occasional sun exposure." The foundation notes that BCCs rarely spread, but the foundation emphasizes that they should always be taken seriously.

**Usually Curable**

Your awareness and vigilance can have a tremendous impact. The foundation asserts: "Skin cancers found and removed early are almost always curable." The foundation recommends a regular, head to toe [**self-screening**](https://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-information/early-detection/step-by-step-self-examination). Inform your doctor of any concerns. The foundation also recommends seeing a dermatologist once a year for a regular screening.

Summer is your time to enjoy being outside. Do it safely and enjoy soaking up those rays.

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