



## NEW AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DERMATOLOGY SURVEY FINDS MOST AMERICANS KNOW SUN PROTECTION IS IMPORTANT, YET MANY AREN'T PROTECTING THEMSELVES

*In recognition of Skin Cancer Awareness Month in May, dermatologists remind the public to #PracticeSafeSun to reduce their risk of skin cancer*

**ROSEMONT, Ill. (April 28, 2020)** — As more Americans head outdoors for warmer weather and fresh air amid “shelter-in-place” measures, dermatologists from the American Academy of Dermatology have an important reminder: practice safe sun. Skin cancer is one of the most preventable types of cancer, but new data from the AAD shows that many Americans aren't taking the necessary steps to protect themselves.

According to a recent AAD survey, 76% of Americans agree that sun protection is an important healthy habit, yet only 41% report regularly protecting themselves outdoors — increasing their risk for skin cancer. While exposure to the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays is the most preventable risk factor for skin cancer, the survey also revealed that 28% of Americans admit they rarely or never use sun protection, and 65% of Americans don't know that shade protects them from the sun's harmful UV rays.

In recognition of Skin Cancer Awareness Month in May and Melanoma Monday® on May 4, the AAD has launched its annual national public awareness campaign encouraging Americans to **#PracticeSafeSun** to protect themselves and their families from skin cancer, the most common cancer in the United States.

“It is estimated that more than 9,500 people are diagnosed with skin cancer every day, and nearly 20 Americans die every day from melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer,” says board-certified dermatologist Bruce H. Thiers, MD, FAAD, president of the AAD. “Skin cancer affects more Americans than any other cancer, yet most cases are preventable by seeking shade, wearing sun-protective clothing and applying sunscreen on all skin not covered by clothing.”

The AAD recommends that everyone #PracticeSafeSun and reduce their risk of skin cancer by:

- **Seeking shade when appropriate**, remembering that the sun's rays are the strongest between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.
- **Wearing sun-protective clothing**, such as a lightweight and long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses with UV protection, when possible.
- **Applying a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher** to all skin not covered by clothing. Remember to **reapply every two hours** or after swimming or sweating.

It is estimated that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime. Because skin cancer is highly treatable when caught early, Dr. Thiers also recommends that everyone perform regular skin self-exams and look out for the [ABCDEs](#) — the warning signs of melanoma:

- **A is for Asymmetry**: One half of the spot is unlike the other half.
- **B is for Border**: The spot has an irregular, scalloped or poorly defined border.
- **C is for Color**: The spot has varying colors from one area to the next, such as shades of tan, brown or black, or areas of white, red or blue.

- **D is for Diameter:** While melanomas are usually greater than 6 millimeters — or about the size of a pencil eraser — when diagnosed, they can be smaller.
- **E is for Evolving:** The spot looks different from the rest or is changing in size, shape or color.

When checking your skin, Dr. Thiers says it's important to ask a partner to help examine hard-to-see areas, like the back. If you notice new or suspicious spots on your skin, he says, or any spots that are changing, itching or bleeding, tell a board-certified dermatologist. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, he says, a dermatologist can examine the spot via [telemedicine](#) to determine if it needs to be tested or removed, and if so, he or she may ask you to come into their office for an in-person appointment.

“When detected early, skin cancer, including melanoma, is highly treatable, making it imperative to check your skin regularly,” says Dr. Thiers. “To reduce your risk of developing skin cancer, practice safe sun. It only takes a few simple steps to protect your skin from UV, and it could save your life.”

For those concerned about vitamin D deficiency — especially amid current shelter-in-place measures — the AAD recommends that consumers get vitamin D from a healthy diet that includes foods naturally rich in vitamin D; foods and beverages fortified with vitamin D; and/or vitamin D supplements. Since UV rays from the sun can cause skin cancer, the AAD does not recommend getting vitamin D from sun exposure.

To learn more about skin cancer prevention and detection, visit [SpotSkinCancer.org](#).

The public can help raise awareness of skin cancer by using the hashtag #PracticeSafeSun when sharing AAD resources and photos of how they use sun protection outdoors. Individuals who have been affected by skin cancer can also share their personal stories on [SpotSkinCancer.org](#) to provide support and inspiration for others fighting skin cancer and communicate the importance of skin cancer prevention and early detection.

To find a board-certified dermatologist in your area, visit [aad.org/findaderm](#).

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#### More Information

[Skin cancer fact sheet](#)

[Melanoma FAQs](#)

[How to prevent skin cancer](#)

[How to detect skin cancer](#)

[Sunscreen Resource Center](#)

#### About the AAD

*Headquartered in Rosemont, Ill., the American Academy of Dermatology, founded in 1938, is the largest, most influential, and most representative of all dermatologic associations. With a membership of more than 20,000 physicians worldwide, the AAD is committed to: advancing the diagnosis and medical, surgical and cosmetic treatment of the skin, hair and nails; advocating high standards in clinical practice, education, and research in*

*dermatology; and supporting and enhancing patient care for a lifetime of healthier skin, hair and nails. For more information, contact the AAD at (888) 462-DERM (3376) or [aad.org](http://aad.org). Follow the AAD on [Facebook](#) (American Academy of Dermatology), [Twitter](#) (@AADskin), [Instagram](#) (@AADskin1), or [YouTube](#) (AcademyofDermatology).*

**About SPOT Skin Cancer™**

*For more information on skin cancer detection and prevention, visit the AAD website [SpotSkinCancer.org](http://SpotSkinCancer.org). There, you can also find instructions on how to perform a skin self-exam and download a body mole map for tracking changes in your skin. SPOT Skin Cancer is the AAD's campaign to create a world without skin cancer through public awareness, community outreach programs and services, and advocacy that promote the prevention, detection and care of skin cancer.*