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**What’s That? Spotting Skin Cancer Early Can Save Your Life**

*May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month. One in five Americans will develop skin cancer, making it the most common form of cancer. But, there’s good news: early detection can save lives.*

Winter Haven, FL (April 20, 2020) ~~–~~ Summer: it’s a recipe for spending more time outdoors. Depending on your activities, all that extra time in the sun is sure to leave you with harmful exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays if you aren’t using proper sun protection. Did you know more than five million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed each year? And of those, roughly 85 percent of melanoma cases are associated with exposure to UV radiation from the sun.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Every year, skin cancer diagnoses outnumber new cases of many other types of cancers such as breast, colon, lung, and prostate.

“Anyone can get skin cancer. Regardless of skin color or background,” says Medical Director of Florida Dermatology and Skin Cancer Centers, Dr. K. Wade Foster. “Fortunately, skin cancer is one of the most preventable forms of cancer and we can lessen our chances by taking a few important measures.”

**So, what can we do to help protect ourselves from a diagnosis?**

**Check yourself:** Florida Dermatology and Skin Cancer Centers recommends that you regularly perform a self-exam by checking yourself in the mirror and looking for any new, unusual or changing areas, and reporting those to your dermatologist right away. An annual skin exam can also help identify suspicious growths, moles, and other dermatologic changes. Areas of the skin that are exposed to the sun are more prone to develop moles or certain growths, and because of this, it’s very important to have an experienced dermatologist or licensed medical professional conduct a yearly body analysis to check all areas of your body, including your scalp, neck, and back.

**What should you look for?**

Florida Dermatology and Skin Cancer Centers (FLDSCC), along with The American Academy of Dermatology recommends conducting annual skin exams to look for the ABCDE’s of skin cancer. A is for Asymmetry: One half of the mole looks different from the other half. B is for Border: The mole has an irregular or poorly defined border. C is for Color: The mole’s color varies from one area to the next, and may include shades of tan, brown or black, or areas of white, red, or blue. D is for Diameter: May be greater than six millimeters, or about the size of a pencil eraser, and can be smaller when diagnosed. E is for Evolving: The mole or lesion is changing in size, shape, or color over time.

**Wear sunscreen:** Liberally apply sunscreen to all exposed areas of your skin when going outdoors. It’s important to read the label of your sunscreen to make certain it is water-resistant and broad-spectrum with an SPF of 30 or higher.If you are sweating or swimming, you’ll need to reapply every two hours.

**Cover up:** Sunscreen is only one part of protecting yourself from the sun’s powerful UV rays. In addition to using it, you should wear protective clothing to guarantee extra coverage.Fortunately, lots of companies make long-sleeved and lightweight shirts, pants, hats and sunglasses with UV protection built in.Make use of these especially when around reflective surfaces like the sand, water, and snow.And when you can, during the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., try to stay under shaded areas since the sun’s UV rays are strongest during that time frame.

**Avoid tanning beds:** Researchers estimate that indoor tanning may cause upwards of 400,000 cases of skin cancer in the United States each year. Luckily there are alternatives to achieving a sun-kissed glow without UV rays with the use of sunless tanning lotions and spray tanning.

**Are you in the know?**

* More than two people die of skin cancer every hour.
* If you’ve had more than five sunburns, your risk of melanoma has doubled.
* Melanoma is the second most common form of cancer in females ages 15-29 and is increasing faster in females in this age group than in males of the same age group.
* It is estimated that melanoma will affect 1 in 27 men and 1 in 40 women in their lifetime.
* The five-year survival rate for people whose melanoma is detected and treated is 99 percent.

Florida Dermatology and Skin Cancer Centers provides a full spectrum of dermatology and skin care services, and its team of physicians, ARNPs, and PAs are experts in diagnosing and treating skin cancers with the latest technological options. Dr. K. Wade Foster is fellowship-trained in Mohs surgery, the most effective technique for most types of skin cancers, with minimal scarring or risk.

“We bring an unmatched level of services to all of our patients and are confident in our approach to treat skin cancer most effectively and efficiently,” says Dr. Foster. “Fortunately, skin cancer treatment, specifically melanoma, has a very favorable outcome since if it is detected early, it’s almost always treatable.”

For more information about services that Florida Dermatology and Skin Cancer Centers provides, or to make an appointment for a skin exam, visit [www.fldscc.com](http://www.fldscc.com/) or contact us at 863.293.2147.

**About Florida Dermatology and Skin Cancer Centers**

Florida Dermatology and Skin Cancer Centers, based in Winter Haven, Florida, treats all types of skin and scalp conditions. Medical director K. Wade Foster, MD, PhD, is Fellowship-trained in Mohs surgery, which is the most effective technique for most skin cancers, with minimal scarring or risk. Several convenient locations serve patients throughout Florida. Complete office listings are available [online](http://www.fldscc.com/).

For more information about Florida Dermatology and Skin Cancer Centers, visit [www.fldscc.com](http://www.fldscc.com/) or contact Cora Ligon at 863.838.5475. Follow our momentum on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/FLDSCCWinterHaven/), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/nativevanilla/), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/FLDermSCC), and the Florida Dermatology and Skin Cancer Centers [blog](https://fldscc.com/news/).

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