

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Protect Yourself from Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States and Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) reminds residents that it is also one of the most preventable cancers. There are several types of skin cancer, with melanoma being the most dangerous. Melanoma of the skin is the fifth most common cancer in Nebraska and there are more cases found here compared to overall US rates.

“Nebraskans are at higher risk for skin cancer for a couple of reasons,” explains Sarah Minnick, Program Manager at SWNPHD. “We have a lot of outdoor workers particularly agriculture workers, and a higher prevalence of people with light-colored skin and hair and eyes.”

If you spend time outdoors without protecting your skin, you are exposing yourself to skin damage and sunburn which increases your risk. Having just five or more sunburns doubles your risk of developing melanoma. People with blue or green eyes, blonde or red hair, and skin that freckles or burns easily are also at higher risk.

When you will be in the sun, following 3 simple steps now can prevent skin cancer later in life.

1. **Wear sunscreen** with an SPF of 30 or higher and re-apply it often.
2. **Wear protective clothing** along with a hat with a 2 to 3-inch-wide brim and UV-blocking sunglasses.
3. **Seek shade**, especially between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm.

“Early detection of skin cancer can save lives,” continues Minnick. “The survival rate is 99% if it’s found while it’s still at the local stage. Keep an eye on your skin and talk to your healthcare provider if you notice changes in your skin’s appearance.”

For more information on preventing skin cancer, contact SWNPHD by calling 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. Follow us on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram or view the website at www.swhealth.ne.gov which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health.

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