

Transplant and Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is the most common cancers seen after transplant. Skin cancer is the uncontrolled growth of abnormal skin cells. Transplant patients have a 20-60 times higher risk of skin cancer than other people.

Risk Factors Include:

- Lifelong exposure to the sun
- Fair skin
- History of burns
- Heredity

A suppressed immune system is also an important risk factor for skin cancer. The impact increases with the amount of time exposed to anti-rejection medicines.

The SPF (Sun Protection Factor) in sunscreen is rated by what is in the sunscreen and the amount applied to skin. If you don't apply enough, a sunscreen with a SPF of 30 may not work as well as it should. To ensure that you get full SPF, you need to apply 1 ounce (About a shot glass full) to your entire body.

Ways You Can Prevent Skin Cancer:

- Limit the amount of time spent in the sun.
- Make sun shielding or sunscreen part of your daily routine.
- Apply a thick coat of sunscreen to all exposed skin 30 minutes before going out in the sun
- Apply sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher every 2 hours that you remain in the sun.

- Re-apply after swimming or sweating. Even if the sunscreen is water-resistant, some will wash off.
- Wear protective clothing that covers the skin, wide brim hats, and UV (ultraviolet) blocking sunglasses.
- Avoid mid-day sun when the sun's rays are most intense (10:00 AM-4:00 PM).
- Remember that sunburns can occur on cloudy days or from water or snow glare.
- Find shade under a tree, umbrella or other ways when you can.
- Use lip balm or cream that has SPF to protect your lips from getting sunburned.
- Never go to UV tanning booths.
- Remember that certain medicines can make your skin more likely to sunburn.
- Examine your skin head-to-toe every month. Skin cancer usually appears as a growth that changes in color, shape or size.
- See your doctor and dermatologist yearly for a full skin exam.
- See your doctor if you notice a suspicious lesion. This includes a non-healing sore, red scaly patch, shiny bump, wart-like growth or irregular shaped mole.

For More Information: www.skincancer.org

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©5/2019. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7359.