

FEATURE

Covering up prevents skin cancer

By Nancy Hartnagel
Catholic News Service

Since sunlight is the main source of ultraviolet (UV) radiation and overexposure to sunlight is a major risk factor for skin cancers, experts agree that covering up is the best prevention.

Skin cancer is the most common kind of cancer, accounting for nearly half of all U.S. cancer cases, according to the American Cancer Society. Among skin cancers, non-melanoma types — such as basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma — are the most prevalent, with approximately 1.3 million U.S. cases each year. The cancer society estimates that about 2,200 deaths will result from nonmelanoma skin cancer in 2002.

The more deadly kind of skin cancer is melanoma, which develops from melanocytes or pigment-producing skin cells. It accounts for only about 4 percent of skin-cancer cases annually but causes nearly 80 percent of skin cancer deaths. The cancer society estimates that there will be more than 53,600 new U.S. cases and some 7,400 deaths from skin cancer in 2002. Maureen Reagan, daughter of President Ronald Reagan, died in August 2001 after a 5-year battle with melanoma.

Besides too much sunlight, other risk factors for skin cancers cited by the American Cancer Society include: fair skin; exposure to such chemicals as arsenic, industrial tar, coal, paraffin and certain types of oil; radiation exposure; some treatments for psoriasis; and weak or suppressed immune systems. In addition, men are twice as likely as women to get basal cell cancers and three times as likely to get squamous cell cancers.

Moles generally are benign skin tumors, but atypical moles, called dysplastic nevi, increase the risk of melanoma. And though half of all melanomas occur in people over 50, damage to cells occurs much earlier, as 80 percent of a person's exposure to the sun's rays occurs before age 18.

Lowering the "sun" risk is something everyone can do by avoiding its most intense rays midday and by covering up or seeking shade when outside during those hours.

Covering up means wearing a shirt and long pants, a hat with a broad brim (basal cell carcinomas, which account for about 75 percent of all skin cancers, usually begin on such exposed areas as the head and



Nancy Wiehac/CNS
The best prevention against sun damage and skin cancer is covering up. A hat, sunglasses and sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher are all essential.

neck), sunglasses (to protect the eyes and skin around the eyes), and a sunscreen with a "sun protection factor" or SPF of 15 or higher. Sunscreens, however, are not recommended for children younger than 6 months.

Skin experts warn that sun lovers make a big mistake by thinking they can stay in the sun longer if they use a good sunscreen. Yet, they note people become careless about not applying sunscreen evenly or often enough, which can increase their exposure to UV radiation. Artificial tanning aids like tanning beds and sun lamps also should be avoided because they deliver a lot of UV radiation.

The Skin Cancer Foundation offers seven tips for "sun safety":

- Don't sunbathe.
- Avoid unnecessary sun exposure, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., the peak hours for harmful ultraviolet radiation.
- When outdoors, use sunscreens rated SPF 15 or higher; apply them liberally, uniformly and frequently, especially when swimming or sweating.
- When exposed to sunlight, wear protective clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, broad-brimmed hats and UV-protective sunglasses.
- Stay away from artificial tanning devices.

• Teach children good sun-protection habits at an early age. The damage that leads to adult skin cancers starts in childhood.

• Examine skin from head to toe at least once every three months and be alert to any changes.

On its Web site (www.skincancer.org), the Skin Cancer Foundation also offers helpful illustrations of atypical moles and how to do a thorough skin self-examination.

Other useful Internet sites include: American Cancer Society, www.cancer.org; American Academy of Dermatology, www.aad.org; National Cancer Institute, www.nci.nih.gov; and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/cancer.

One bit of good news is that almost all skin cancers diagnosed and treated early can be cured.

But don't forget that, as sure as the sun rises and sets, in between it burns, so cover up.

Free prescription information available

Two new publications offer information that can translate into savings on prescription drug costs.

The Prescription Assistance Coalition recently published the booklet "How to Get Free Prescription Drugs When You Can't Afford to Pay" and the special report "How to Get a Free Prescription Discount Card to Save Money on Prescription Drugs." The booklet gives information on how and where to get free and low-cost prescription drugs directly from drug manufacturers. The special report gives step-by-step instructions for consumers to obtain a free prescription drug discount card that can be used at Rochester-area pharmacies.

For a copy of the publications, send \$5 (to cover the cost of printing, postage and handling) to Central Fulfillment Center, Free Prescription Drug Booklet Offer #FPD0516, P.O. Box 408342, Chicago, IL 60640-8342.

Free medical care information available

A new booklet includes information on how consumers can get free and low-cost medical care in the Rochester area under the federal Hill-Burton program.

The Hill-Burton program was established in 1946 to provide financial assistance in the construction and modernization of hospitals and medical care facilities. In exchange, the facilities agreed to provide a reasonable amount of services to those who are unable to pay their medical bills.

To obtain a copy of "Free & Low Cost Medical Care," send \$5 (to cover the cost of printing, postage and handling) to Patient Assistance Network, Free & Low Cost Medical Care Booklet, Dept. MCB-0605, P.O. Box 60382, Washington, D.C. 20039-0382.

Adecco
HEALTH

RNs • LPNs • RAD TECHS • MED ASSTs
• DENTAL ASSTs/HYGIENISTS

Stop Looking! Every Day We Offer:

Flex Hours, Medical Benefits, Tuition Reimbursement, Vacation Bonus, 401K Plan,
Direct Deposit, Temp/Temp to Direct & Direct Hire Positions.

Call Today! (585) 454-5511 • adecco.health@adeccona.com

Club 24
SENIOR LIVING AT HOME

Club 24 Senior Living at Home is a program sponsored by Unity Health system providing non-clinical services in the convenience of your home.

Just A Few of the Quality Services We Provide:

• Companions	• Lawn and Garden Care	• Emergency response system
• Window washing	• Painting	• Hairdressing
• Power washing	• Housekeeping	• Home delivered meals
• Plumbing	• Grocery shopping	• Home health care
• Gutter Cleaning		• Transportation

Call Today For Information and a Free Estimate **723-7324**

1477 Long Pond Road, Rochester, New York

BARTHOLOMEW
HEALTH CARE GROUP

Quality Long Term Care Facilities

*You have a choice...
come and see us.*

visit our web site at www.bhcg.com

<p><i>Crest Manor Living and Rehabilitation Center</i> 6745 Pittsford - Palmyra Road Fairport, New York 14450 (585) 223-3633</p> <p><i>LeRoy Village Green</i> 10 Munson Street LeRoy, New York 14482 (585) 768-2561</p>	<p><i>East Side Living and Rehabilitation Center</i> 62 Prospect Street Warsaw, New York 14569 (585) 786-8151</p> <p><i>The Greens of LeRoy</i> One West Ave., P.O. Box 7 LeRoy, New York 14482 (585) 768-2740</p>
--	--

Federal and state law prohibit this facility from denying admission to anyone because of race, creed, age, color, national origin, sex, disability, marital status, sponsor or sexual preference. EOE

Nazareth College. The Heart of Excellence

HEALTH PROFESSIONS

<p>Art Therapy Communication Sciences & Disorders/Speech Pathology Gerontology Music Therapy Nursing</p>	<p>Physical Therapy Pre-Dentistry Pre-Medicine Pre-Veterinary Social Work</p>
--	---

4245 East Avenue
Rochester NY 14618
www.naz.edu

For further information on Undergraduate programs, call Admissions at
585-389-2860

For information on Graduate programs, call the Graduate Studies Office
585-389-2815