

For Immediate Release:

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SKIN CANCER AWARENESS

According to the American Cancer Society, more than one million Americans are diagnosed each year with skin cancer, the most common form of cancer. Of these, about 55,000 people will be diagnosed with melanoma, the most serious and deadly form of skin cancer.

Most skin cancers are highly curable if detected early and treated properly. The American Cancer Society recommends that you do a monthly skin self-exam and include a skin examination as part of your routine health exam. Some of the signs and symptoms of skin cancer are:

- Any change on the skin, especially in the size or color of a mole or other darkly pigmented growth or spot, or a new growth
- A sore that does not heal
- Scaliness, oozing, bleeding, or change in the appearance of a bump on the skin
- The spread of pigmentation beyond its border such as dark coloring that spreads past the edge of a mole or mark on the skin
- A change in sensation, itchiness, tenderness, or pain

Risk factors for skin cancer include:

- Unprotected and/or excessive exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation
- Fair skin
- Exposure at work to coal tar, pitch, creosote, arsenic compounds, or radium
- Family history
- Multiple or unusual shaped moles
- Severe sunburns as a child

Adopting a regular skin protection routine for all seasons can decrease your risk of skin cancer. Call your doctor if you find any unusual changes.

For and more information on skin cancer you may contact the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or log on to their website at www.cancer.org. For health information about our tri-county area, you may log on to the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency website at www.bhsj.org.