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NALC169_07_01_23
MC1400.169

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Care ConnectionsSM

Sharing the
knowledge for
better health

JULY 2023

Summer skin care tips

Summer is in full swing. Sun, heat, and damp or dry weather can all take a toll on your skin. Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer. Over years, skin damage from UV (ultraviolet) rays from the sun builds up. This is the most common cause of skin cancer. All skin types are at risk for skin damage, no matter race or ethnicity. Some medicines can also make your skin sensitive. Talk to your doctor about the risk of skin damage.



Warm weather also means a higher risk of bugs carrying illness, like ticks and mosquitos. Keep yourself safe during the summer with these easy tips:

- Always wear sunscreen on your face, arms, and legs. Don't rely only on clothing to protect you. Even when it's cloudy, UV rays can still harm you. Choose sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Make sure it protects from both UVA and UVB rays.
- Drink water throughout the day. Start before you go out in the sun.
- When outside, try to stay in the shade. You can also carry an umbrella with you, even when it's sunny.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants. These can be lightweight fabrics, so you don't get too hot. Look for clothing with UVA/UVB protection. Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes and hats for your head.
- Bug spray protects you from mosquitoes and other bugs which often carry illnesses. Always follow the instructions on the label.
- **Removing ticks:** 1) Grasp the tick close to the skin with tweezers—pull it straight out. Go slow. Do not squeeze or twist the tick. 2) Clean the bite with antiseptic. 3) For the next few days, check the bite area for rash. Also look for signs of infection (fever, chills, headache, muscle ache, weakness). For more, check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov for their tick identification guide. You can also watch the video "[How to properly remove a tick](#)" on YouTube.

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For women: mammograms, pap, and HPV tests

Regular screening tests are a great way to stay in control of your health. The first step is to talk to your doctor about what tests are best for you based on your risk factors. Your doctor will likely talk to you about mammograms, Pap, and HPV tests.

Mammograms: These are X-ray pictures of the breast. A mammogram looks for breast cancer or changes in the breast that are not normal. Pictures are taken from the top and side of the breasts. A technician will help place your breasts between plates on a mammogram machine. The plates are moved slowly together to press your breast flat. This helps to get a clearer picture of your breast tissue. Some women may fear getting a mammogram because they think it will hurt. It may cause pain for some, but that's not always the case. You will feel some pressure or tightness, but any discomfort shouldn't last a long time.

When do you need to get a mammogram? Opinions vary among health experts. Some women ages 40 to 49 may wish to start breast cancer screenings. Generally, women ages 50 to 74 should have a mammogram every other year. Your best bet is to talk to your doctor. If you have risk factors, such as family history of breast cancer, your doctor may suggest you start screenings at age 40 and then repeat as often as annually.

Pap and HPV tests: The Pap test looks for signs of cancer on your cervix. The cervix is the narrow opening leading to your womb or uterus. An HPV test looks for human papillomavirus (HPV) infection in the cervix. This is a type of sexually transmitted disease that can lead to cervical cancer. The Pap and HPV tests can be done at the same time. For these tests, you will lie on an exam table in your doctor's office. A tool will be placed in your vagina to help the doctor see better. Some cells will then be scraped off the cervix. These cells will be sent to a lab for testing.

Ask your doctor about which tests are right for you and how often you should get them. The U.S. Preventative Services Task Force recommends cervical cancer screening begin at age 21. How often you should get a screening will depend on your own individual risk factors. Screenings are the type of tests done for those whose results are normal. Should you have an abnormal test, other tests will be needed. If this occurs, your doctor will talk with you about next steps based on your risks.

Have more questions? Reach out to your program nurse!

For men: taking care of your prostate

Taking care of your prostate is an important part of staying healthy. The prostate is a small organ located below the bladder in men. It plays a key role in your ability to have children. However, as men age, the prostate can become larger. This can sometimes cause problems. It can cause pain and serious health issues. African American men are also at a higher risk for prostate issues. This includes prostate cancer. However, we don't completely understand why this happens. You should stay on top of your prostate health. You can do this by watching for any signs of prostate issues.

Signs of problems that may be from your prostate:

- Frequent urge to pee or trouble peeing: you may feel like you need to go but then can't/don't. You may also be peeing a lot, especially at night. Some men may also have a weak stream of pee or feel incomplete dribbling.
- Pain during ejaculation or peeing. You may have burning when peeing, or pain/stiffness in your lower back or hips.
- Erectile dysfunction: trouble to achieve or maintain an erection.
- Blood in pee or semen: if you notice blood in your pee or semen, you should see a doctor as soon as possible.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, it is important to talk to your doctor. They may perform a blood test called the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test. These can help the doctor to figure out the cause of your symptoms. Early testing and treatment can make a big difference. It is also good to do monthly self-exams of your testes. These are the organs that produce semen. You can ask your doctor how to do this check.

Here are tips to keep your prostate healthy:

- **Get regular checkups.** If you notice any new symptoms you should let your doctor know. Your doctor can perform a PSA or digital rectal exam (DRE) test to check for signs of prostate cancer and other prostate problems.
- **Exercise regularly.** This is good for keeping your weight manageable and your prostate healthy.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Eating a diet low in fat and filled with fruits and vegetables may help with your prostate health.

Talk to your doctor if prostate cancer screening is right for you. If you have any questions about your prostate health, reach out to your program nurse.