

5 Tips for Preventing Skin Cancer in Your Atlanta Parent

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States, making up more than half of the total cancer cases diagnosed each year. Unfortunately, about 8,000 people will die of melanoma in the U.S. this year. It is estimated that 2,800 people will die of non-melanoma skin cancer this year as well. Unfortunately, skin cancer is on the rise, primarily due to people living longer and more and more exposure to the sun.

Men are twice as likely to develop skin cancer as women. In fact, skin cancer is more common than prostate cancer, lung cancer, and colon cancer in men over 50. That's why it's so important to have regular checkups by a dermatologist if there are any suspicious moles or skin growths.

Everyone loves the sun ... it's warm and inviting and helps to lift our spirits. However, these benefits can come with a bad tradeoff.

Here are some tips from FirstLight HomeCare of Atlanta and [The Skin Cancer Foundation](#) to help you practice sun safety for yourself, your kids and your aging parents:

1. **Stay out of the sun between 10AM – 4PM** or seek shade. If at all possible, it is best to steer clear of the sun's harmful UV rays when they are at their peak. Carry a sun umbrella or wear a wide-brimmed hat.
2. **Do not burn.** A sunburn dramatically increases your risk of melanoma. Think about it ... five or more sunburns more than doubles your lifetime risk. Take cover under a shady tree as much as possible.
3. **Say No to Tanning Booths.** As we speak, the government is proposing legislation to ban tanning booths for children under the age of 18. No matter what you read, tanning booths still emit harmful UV rays. In fact, new high-pressure sunlamps used in tanning salons actually emit UVR doses as much as 12 times that of the sun! You can always try tanning crèmes or a spray on tan – both have become quite popular.
4. **Cover up with dark clothing or UV sunglasses.** Did you know that a white shirt has an Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) of about 5, meaning the shirt lets in about 1/5 of the sun's rays, whereas blue jeans have a UPF of approximately 1700? The more skin you can cover the better! They even make clothing now with a UPF label to help provide protection. And no more sunglasses from the Dollar Store. To protect your eyes you need UV-protecting lenses – it can save you from glaucoma as well.
5. **Sunblock, sunblock, sunblock.** You need to wear sunblock every day that offers "broad spectrum" or "UVA/ UVB" protection regardless if you are going to be directly exposed to the sun or not. Even on overcast days, 70-80 percent of UVR travels through clouds. And in the winter, sunlight can reflect off the snow or ice. Apply your sunscreen all over your body at least 30 minutes before going outside and reapply every two hours.

At FirstLight HomeCare of Atlanta, we want you to be able to enjoy yourself outdoors – safely that is!