

Pay Attention to Skin Cancer Risk In Summer Heat

People should get their skin checked and protect themselves against greater sun exposure in the summer.

By TAYLOR STRICKLAND
Daily Sun Senior Writer

Florida's heat index has been hitting record highs this summer, but what does that mean for skin protection?

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States as well as one of the most preventable, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. An analysis of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey from the National Institutes of Health suggests 6.1 million adults are treated for certain skin cancers each year.

Exposure to UV light has long been established as a primary cause of skin cancer, but an increase in temperatures doesn't necessarily lead to an increase in UV exposure.

"The greatest risk for the development of new skin cancers is the quantity and duration of unprotected skin exposure to high-intensity UV radiation," said Dr. Robert Reilly, medical director of risk based care at The Villages Health. "So the heat index itself would not increase risk, unless patients were choosing to spend more time outdoors

without the use of skin protection."

Reilly said higher temperatures tend to force people indoors or make them participate in cooler activities — especially in Florida. However, skin cancer risk can be higher for those not acclimated to areas with extreme heat.

UV levels tend to be higher closer to the equator, according to the National Institutes of Health, but the CDC listed Vermont, Minnesota, New Hampshire and Iowa as the top five states with the highest rates of skin cancer in the country.

Reilly said the difference in skin cancer rates between northern and southern regions is because people living in northern climates have fewer months of sun to enjoy and, as such, may actually spend a greater amount of time outside during the summer, which correlates to the higher-intensity UV months.

"As opposed to us living in Florida where we not only have sun enjoyment year-round, therefore making it more likely we will enjoy time outside in smaller parcels, but also we tend to have more of an ongoing awareness of the need for sun barrier protective mechanisms to minimize skin cancer risk," Reilly said.

Those with skin cancer or who have had skin cancer before have a greater risk of developing it again, according



Ernst Timm, of the Village Del Mar, participates in the Critters Water Aerobics class at the Savanna Center Sports Pool. He wears a long-sleeve water shirt to avoid sun damage.

Photos by India Pantin | Daily Sun

to the American Cancer Society

Additional risk factors include skin type, eye color, family history as well as the intensity and duration of sun exposure. Those who have had skin biopsies or injuries in the past should also be careful, Reilly said, as newer skin even more vulnerable to sun damage.

Seniors are especially at risk as skin cancer can occur more rapidly in aging skin. The Skin Cancer Foundation reports that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer by the age of 70, and most skin cancers are diagnosed in older adults.

"Skin protection is the name of the game," Reilly said. "Always use high SPF sunscreen on exposed skin, wear hats when planning to be out in the sun for extended periods of time, and try to limit the duration of sun exposure whenever possible."

Reilly believes a big risk is forgetting to consider skin



Mary Ann Kober, of the Village Santiago, participates in the Critters Water Aerobics class.

protection when in the pool or during overcast days.

"In fact, these scenarios actually increase skin damage risk as people tend to feel cooler and forget to keep their

skin protected," Reilly said.

It's generally recommended people protect their skin with waterproof sunscreen products at higher SPF levels. Such is the advice that

Critters Water Aerobics instructors Susan Butler and Carole Truesdale give to their students. The Critters Water Aerobics class meets every morning except Sunday, and they all gather in the pool at Savannah Center.

Students wear hats and sunglasses, and some, like Villager Ernst Timm and his wife Kate, wear long-sleeved water shirts to avoid sun damage.

The water shirts were Kate's idea, as she has previous history with skin cancer. Every morning, the Village Del Mar couple slathers on sunscreen and their aerobics attire before heading to class.

Reilly said the frequency of which patients should be checked for skin cancer varies. Depending upon individual risk, prior history of skin cancer, and potentially other underlying medical conditions and medications taken, some people may need more frequent examinations.

Any concerns patients have should be discussed with their doctor. The Villages Health's care centers are able to provide full-body skin examinations by trained practitioners, as well as perform procedures including both biopsies and removal of skin lesions and cancers. Call 844-884-9355 to schedule.

Senior writer Taylor Strickland can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5334, or taylor.strickland@thevillagesmedia.com.

Assisted Living That Feels Like Home

Specializing in Assisted Living & Dedicated Memory Care

Exceptional Savings For Your Loved Ones!

VETERAN'S MOVE-IN PROGRAM

Please contact community for additional information

We Salute Our Veterans!

ZERO DEFICIENCY Audit from AHCA 2022

AL#11808

MISSION OAKS

ASSISTED LIVING AND MEMORY CARE

10780 N. US HWY 301, Oxford, FL 34484

(352) 330-3900

www.MissionOaks.net

Proudly Serving Our Community for 13 Years!

Aesthetic Dental

DENTURES & IMPLANTS

General Dentistry • Implants • Dentures • Partial

Dr. Majid Heydari

IMPLANTS - ONSITE 3D CONE BEAM SCANNER

By taking 3-dimensional images of your mouth and teeth, we can dramatically reduce the risk of improper implant placement by locating the exact placement of bone and nerves.* By using the latest technology, we can limit the amount of surgery and risk...

FREE 20-MIN CONSULT CALL FOR APPOINTMENT

352-430-2720

FREE IMPLANT CONSULTATION

With this ad. Expires 8/22/2023. (Panorex D0330 & D0150) *Call for details. Offer does not apply to any dental insurance.

Now that has got to make you smile!

340 Heald Way, Ste. 218, The Villages, FL 32163

On 466A across from McDonald's & Colony Plaza

(352) 633-2467

www.VillagesTeeth.com

FREE 20-MIN CONSULT CALL FOR APPOINTMENT

352-430-2720

ACUPUNCTURE CAN HELP

Neck Pain Back Pain Joint Pain Stress & Anxiety

MOST INSURANCES ACCEPTED

Dr. Christopher Chestire, DOM

Dr. Dunjot Destina, DOM

A safe and healthy oasis for you to manage your pain, recover from injuries, and find relief from your ailments.

910 Old Camp Rd, Ste 192, The Villages, FL 32162

Lake Sumter Landing™ • mulberryintmed.com

SUMMER SPECIAL 10%-20% OFF

Visit Our Newly Updated Showroom For An Additional \$100 Off!

SHADE MASTERS USA

352-801-1586

shademastersUSA.com

Call Now for a FREE IN-HOME QUOTE

Experience the Comfort of Shade!

Less Glare, Heat and Furniture Fading

• Interior & Exterior Shades — Motorized & Manual

• Automated Garage & Patio Screens

• Authorized HunterDouglas® Dealer

105 PARK CENTER ST. UNIT 102, LEESBURG, FL 34748 • 10 YEARS EXPERIENCE