



AWARENESS

SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

According to the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA), South Africa has the second highest incidence of skin cancer in the world after Australia, and one of the highest incidence of melanoma – the most dangerous form of skin cancer – worldwide.

Every year, at least 20 000 South Africans are diagnosed with non-melanoma skin cancers – cancers that occur in the skin that are not melanoma – and approximately 1 500 are diagnosed with melanoma.

Skin cancer – a highly preventable and treatable disease – is caused by chronic exposure to sunlight and affects anyone, regardless of skin colour, gender or age.

This Skin Cancer Awareness Month – from 1 December to 31 January – be sun smart and educate yourself about the dangers of the sun and its rays.

Tips to reduce your risk include:

- Sunburn can occur within 15 minutes. The damage caused is permanent, irreversible and increases your risk of skin cancer.
- Avoid sunbeds and sunlamps. They can elevate your risk of skin cancer.

- Use an effective sunscreen with an SPF of between 20 to 50. Apply it liberally to all exposed skin.
- Apply sunscreen at least 20 minutes before going outside. Re-apply regularly (every two hours) and after towel drying, perspiring or swimming.
- Wear protective clothing such as wide-brim hats, loose fitting shirts and sunglasses with an ultraviolet (UV) protection of UV400
- The sun's rays are most dangerous between 10am and 3pm. Avoid direct sun exposure during this time and stay in the shade or under an umbrella as much as possible. Remember, you can get sunburn on a cloudy day - UV light can still penetrate light cloud cover.
- Carefully check your skin monthly for spots, marks or moles.
- Warning signs for skin cancer include: asymmetrical marks, moles that change colour, grow big or have irregular edges. Seek medical advice immediately if you notice any of these changes – early detection of skin cancer is vital.
- Get screened at your local CANSA care centre.

Be sun smart and practice good and responsible sun care throughout the year.