

May



National Health Observances



ODPHP

Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

May is Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month

Sponsor: American Academy of Dermatology
(<http://www.aad.org/>) 

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is the main cause of skin cancer. UV radiation can also come from tanning booths or sunlamps. The most dangerous kind of skin cancer is called melanoma.

The good news? Skin cancer can almost always be cured when it's found and treated early. Communities, health professionals, and families can work together to prevent skin cancer or detect it early on.

This May, spread the word about strategies for preventing skin cancer and encourage communities, organizations, families, and individuals to get involved.

How can Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month make a difference?

We can use this month to raise awareness about skin cancer and help people take action to prevent or detect it – both at home and in the community.

Here are just a few ideas:

- Encourage families to adopt good habits together, like wearing sunscreen and limiting their time in the sun.
- Motivate teachers and administrators to teach kids about the harm of UV radiation and why it's important to protect yourself.
- Identify youth leaders in your community who can talk to their peers about taking steps to prevent skin cancer.
- Partner with a local hospital, state fair, or similar organization to host a skin cancer screening event.

How can I help spread the word?

We've made it easier for you to make a difference. This toolkit is full of ideas to help you take action today. For example:

- Add information about skin cancer prevention to your newsletter.
- Tweet about Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month.
- Host a community event where families can learn how to prevent skin cancer.
- Add a Web badge to your website, blog, or social networking profile.

Get the Word Out

Sample Announcement for Newsletter, Listserv, or Media Release

Cut and paste this text into your newsletter, listserv, or media release. Add local details and quotes from your organization.

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is the main cause of skin cancer. UV damage can also cause wrinkles and blotches or spots on your skin. The good news is that skin cancer can be prevented, and it can almost always be cured when it's found and treated early.

[Your organization] is proud to participate in Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month. During the month of May, join us in taking action to prevent skin cancer and reduce the risk of UV damage.

- **[Add details about your local activities.]**
- **[Include quote from your organization.]**

Take simple steps today to protect your skin:

- Stay out of the sun as much as possible between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher. Put on sunscreen every 2 hours and after you swim or sweat.
- Cover up with long sleeves and a hat.
- Check your skin once a month for changes.

For more information, visit **[insert your organization information]**.

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Sample Tweets

- May is Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month! Take these steps to protect yourself from #SkinCancer: <http://1.usa.gov/1G8qOTW>
 - Tweet this message: <http://ctt.ec/w9Bj1>
- Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is the main cause of #SkinCancer. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2mxjLDq>
 - Tweet this message: <http://ctt.ec/u9414>
- DYK? #SkinCancer is the most common type of cancer in the U.S. Learn more: <http://1.usa.gov/1AZDGpd>
 - Tweet this message: <http://ctt.ec/k21WM>
- Is indoor tanning safer than tanning in the sun? The answer is no. Find out why: <http://1.usa.gov/1bbBePF>
 - Tweet this message: <http://ctt.ec/Y44c4>
- You can protect yourself from #SkinCancer by doing regular skin self-exams. Learn how: <http://1.usa.gov/1nZSIRU>
 - Tweet this message: <http://ctt.ec/2C0s5>
- Be cool and wear your shades – UV rays can hurt your eyes. Get more tips to keep your eyes healthy: <http://bit.ly/1zNmQ1e>
 - Tweet this message: <http://ctt.ec/85TFd>
- Skin cancer affects people of all ages, including older adults. Get the facts: <http://1.usa.gov/jt7vYY>
 - Tweet this message: <http://ctt.ec/fnE4o>
- Health Tip: Put sunscreen on 30 minutes before you go outside to help prevent #SkinCancer. For more tips: <http://bit.ly/1Vc9PJt>
 - Tweet this message: <http://ctt.ec/4lay2>

E-cards

- CDC: Prevent Skin Cancer (<http://t.cdc.gov/ecards/message.aspx?cardid=314>)

Web Badge

- UV Safety Month - Protect your skin. (<http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/nhoBadges.aspx#may2>)

Get Involved

Take action to raise awareness about skin cancer prevention and detection.

1. Post skin safety tips near frequently used exits so members and employees of your organization can read them before stepping out into the sun.
2. Send a memo with vacation tips to your members. Encourage them to pack sunscreen, wear hats, and avoid direct sunlight between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
3. Host a tree-planting event. Ask your organization's leaders to plant trees around the building so members and employees can enjoy the outdoors while staying in the shade. Consider teaming up with local environmental organizations for cross-promotion.
4. Ask a local professional (such as a dermatologist, registered nurse, or public health official) to demonstrate how to check skin regularly for warning signs of skin cancer.
5. Find a free skin cancer screening event near you [✉](http://www.aad.org/scs/search/default.aspx).
(<http://www.aad.org/scs/search/default.aspx>)

Adapted from the American Academy of Dermatology.

For more information and materials, contact the American Academy of Dermatology.

(<https://www.aad.org/Forms/ContactUs/Default.aspx>) [✉](https://www.aad.org/Forms/ContactUs/Default.aspx)

Share These Resources

Health Topics

- Take Steps to Prevent Skin Cancer
(<http://www.healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/parenting/safety/steps-to-prevent-skin-cancer>)

Healthy People Topic Area

- Cancer
(<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=5>)

Personal Health Tools

- Skin Cancer Risk Tool
(<http://www.cancer.gov/melanomarisktool/>)
- UV Index
(<https://www.epa.gov/sunsafety/uv-index-1>)
- Sun Safety IQ Quiz 
(<http://www.cancer.org/healthy/toolsandcalculators/quizzes/app/sun-safety-quiz>)
- “Suntelligence” Sun-Smart Quiz 
(<http://www.aad.org/Suntelligence/>)

Other Resources

- Sunburn
(<http://www.healthfinder.gov/scripts/SearchContext.asp?topic=1019>)
- Skin Cancer
(<http://healthfinder.gov/scripts/SearchContext.asp?topic=793>)

Find More Information

- American Academy of Dermatology
(<http://www.aad.org>)
Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month Sponsor
- SPOT Skin Cancer
(<https://www.aad.org/public/spot-skin-cancer>)
American Academy of Dermatology
- Skin Cancer
(<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/>)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Skin Care and Aging
(<http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/skin-care-and-aging>)
National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Aging
- Skin Cancer
(<http://www.cancer.gov/types/skin>)
National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute
- Protecting Yourself in the Sun
(<http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3166/osha3166.html>)
Occupational Health and Safety Administration
- Sun Safety
(<http://www.epa.gov/sunsafety>)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Tips to Plan a National Health Observance

Each National Health Observance (NHO) presents an opportunity to educate the public, energize co-workers and community members, and promote healthy behaviors. The NHO toolkits (<http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/>) have the information and tools you need to get started.

Use the tips in this guide to plan a successful health promotion event.

Planning:

Planning is critical to the success of any outreach effort. Contact the NHO sponsoring organization several months ahead of time to request up-to-date information and materials (Contact information for each month's sponsoring organization is provided in each toolkit).

- Consider enlisting the help of a community partner to help you plan and promote your event.
- Meet with those who will be valuable in your event coordination. To get started, sit down with potential partners, such as local businesses, local government agencies, key leaders, organizations, and media partners who share an interest in the NHO.
- Recruit volunteers, speakers, and community liaisons.
- Develop new or adapt existing materials to distribute at the event.
- Be sure to get them printed and/or copied in advance.
- Conduct a run-through before the event.

Promoting:

Develop a publicity and media outreach plan. Designate a media contact from your planning team and make sure they are available to answer questions and follow up on media requests.

- Start by creating a local media list.
- Use local access television, radio, newspaper, and community calendars to promote your event.
- Post event announcements on your Web site. Encourage your partners to post similar announcements on their Web sites.
- Send a press release.
- Engage the media by offering a spokesperson from your organization or the community.

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- Post flyers or posters throughout the community: on bulletin boards at local community centers, places of worship, the library, post office, local schools, recreation centers, clinics, pharmacies, stores, and businesses.
- Send flyers to each participating organization for distribution.

On the Day of the Event:

- Set up tables, chairs, and a check-in table prior to your event.
- Make plenty of sign-in sheets. Create a separate sign-in sheet for members of the media.
- Don't forget the refreshments!
- Make signs to direct participants and reporters to your event.

Tracking Media Coverage:

If you are distributing information to the media, plan ahead of time to track your coverage. There are both paid and free resources to track media coverage.

Free media tracking resources search for news articles based on your specific search term(s) and a date range. Some tracking services will send automatic e-mail alerts to notify you when your event and/or keywords are mentioned.

Paid media tracking typically captures a wider range of media stories (both print and online) than free Internet search tools. Paid media tracking sources search within certain locations, news outlet types, and/or specific dates. Some paid media tracking tools offer e-mail alerts and the ability to search archived Web and print news; they also allow users to tailor searches to obtain the most relevant media stories. Other paid media services monitor all forms of social media, including blogs, top video and image-sharing sites, forums, opinion sites, mainstream online media, and Twitter.

Be sure to share media coverage with your community partners, stakeholders, and all those who helped you plan and promote your event. Post a summary of media coverage on your organization's Web site. No matter the size or success of your event, remember that your efforts are key to educating the public about important health issues.

Last but not least, share your feedback and results with us here at healthfinder.gov. You can contact us at healthfinder@hhs.gov or send us a tweet @healthfinder (<http://twitter.com/Healthfinder>) .



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