

## May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. In fact, it is estimated by the American Cancer Society that substantially more than one million cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed this year.

### Practice safe sun! Here are some ways you can do this:

- Avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Seek shade: Look for shade, especially in the middle of the day when the sun's rays are strongest. Practice the shadow rule and teach it to children. If your shadow is shorter than you, the sun's rays are at their strongest.
- Slip on a shirt: Cover up with protective clothing to guard as much skin as possible when you are out in the sun. Choose comfortable clothes made of tightly woven fabrics that you cannot see through when held up to a light.
- Slop on sunscreen: Use sunscreen and lip balm with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. Apply a generous amount of sunscreen (about a palmful) and reapply after swimming, toweling dry, or perspiring. Use sunscreen even on hazy or overcast days.
- Slap on a hat: Cover your head with a wide-brimmed hat, shading your face, ears, and neck. If you choose a baseball cap, remember to protect your ears and neck with sunscreen.
- Wrap on sunglasses: Wear sunglasses with 99% to 100% UV absorption to provide optimal protection for the eyes and the surrounding skin.
- Follow these practices to protect your skin even on cloudy or overcast days. UV rays travel through clouds.
- Avoid other sources of UV light. Tanning beds and sun lamps are dangerous because they can damage your skin.



### If you have any of the following symptoms, tell your doctor.

- Any change on the skin, especially in the size or color of a mole or other darkly pigmented growth or spot, or a new growth
- Scaliness, oozing, bleeding, or change in the appearance of a bump or nodule
- The spread of pigmentation beyond its border such as dark coloring that spreads past the edge of a mole or mark
- A change in sensation, itchiness, tenderness, or pain

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## NCS Physicians Answer Your FAQs

**Q:** I have heard that if I go to a tanning booth I won't get melanoma?

**A:** Wrong! Tanning booth use is one of the reasons experts think that rates of melanoma are rising, and are so high in the Pacific Northwest.

**Q:** Does melanoma run in families?

**A:** Yes, melanoma can run in families. It can sometimes be linked to families with breast cancer, through the BRCA genes. There are other 'melanoma genes' that have been identified. Usually the families that have these mutations have many family members with melanoma. Also, individuals from these families tend to get more than one melanoma in their lifetime.

**Q:** Last year I had a basal cell carcinoma removed from my skin. Does this mean I am at risk for other cancers?

**A:** Generally speaking, basal cell carcinoma is a harmless skin cancer that needs to be removed but does not need to be treated with chemotherapy and usually does not spread throughout the body. Basal cell carcinoma is an indicator of sun exposure, though, so you need to definitely follow up with your dermatologist and make sure you are being screened for other cancers, especially melanoma, which can be much more serious.

If you have a question or topic of discussion you would like to submit please email [NCS.e-News](mailto:NCS.e-News).

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## National Cancer Research Month

The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) acknowledges May as National Cancer Research Month in recognition of the AACR and its focus on high quality, innovative cancer research.



Northwest Cancer Specialists has built a history of deep investments in research, including a [clinical trials program](#) that's the largest in the state. In the last decade, NCS, through our affiliation with US Oncology, has contributed to the development of 39 widely-used cancer-fighting drugs.

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### NCS EDUCATIONAL CLASSES

#### [Skin Cancers: Warning Signs, Prevention and Treatment](#)

Presented by Dr. John Smith  
May 18  
Rose Quarter Cancer Center

#### [Clara Jean Natural Health & Wellness Festival - 5k/10k](#)

May 22  
Esther Short Park, Vancouver

#### [Survivor's Day - Celebrate Life!](#)

June 6  
Miller Hall, World Forestry Center

#### [Group Yoga, Stretching & Pilates](#)

Every Wednesday  
Vancouver Cancer Center

More [educational classes and events](#).

### Wasabi Team SOAR (Survivors on a River)

Wasabi Team SOAR is a competitive dragon boat team made up entirely of women cancer survivors.

You do not need to be an "athlete" to be a part of Team SOAR. You just need to possess a willingness to learn and a love of the water!



Team SOAR offers paddling opportunities at both the recreational and competitive levels. Be their guest on the water **Saturday, May 22** at the Wasabi Paddling Club in Downtown Portland. Give it a try...its FUN!!

For more information please email [Gretchen Brown](#) or [Sharon Cresalia](#).