



## MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Your public health team, connecting with our communities to achieve healthier outcomes

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### **Enjoy the sun safely**

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- Summer is upon us, and along with summer fun comes a lot of time spent in the sun.

With skin cancer on the rise, sun protection is more important than ever. Skin cancer has become the most common form of cancer in the United States with one in every five Americans developing skin cancer in their lifetime.

Early detection and treatment greatly increases the likelihood of survival, so it is essential to conduct head-to-toe skin scans each month. Red flags include:

- A skin growth that increases in size and appears pearly, translucent, tan, brown, black, or multicolored.
- A mole, birthmark, beauty mark, or any brown spot that changes color or texture, increases in size or thickness, has an irregular outline, is bigger than a pencil eraser, or appears after age 21.
- A spot or sore that does not heal or continues to itch or hurt, crust, scab, or bleed.
- New or unusual growths.

If you find any of these on your body, you should contact your doctor for a professional skin exam. For additional instructions on how to conduct a head-to-toe skin scan, visit [www.skincancer.org](http://www.skincancer.org).

Limiting exposure to the sun and other sources of ultraviolet light, like tanning beds and booths, are the best ways to lower your risk of skin cancer. People who have been exposed to UV radiation from indoor tanning experience a 59 percent increase in the risk of melanoma, the deadliest type of skin cancer, and the risk increases each time a sunlamp is used. When outdoors, be sure exposed skin is covered by wearing a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses. Apply sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to unprotected skin before going outside and reapply every two hours. One last tip: never let your skin burn.

Teen girls and young women need to be especially careful, as melanoma is the second most common cancer in women between 20 and 29 years of age. Protection is equally important during childhood, since severe sunburns in childhood may be associated with an increased risk of developing melanoma later in life.

For more information on skin cancer and ways to keep your skin safe, you can visit [www.skincancer.org](http://www.skincancer.org)

*Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.*

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