

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
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Skin Cancer Awareness

As the heat starts to bring people out of the house and into the great outdoors, SWNPHD encourages residents to remember taking action to protect their skin now will help prevent skin cancer in the future. Skin cancer is one of the top 5 most common forms of cancer found in southwest Nebraska every year. There have been 155 cases of melanoma of skin in the health district between 2013 and 2023.

“Most skin cancers are caused by too much exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays,” explains Sarah Minnick, Program Manager at SWNPHD. “While most UV exposure comes from the sun, it can come from other sources too, like indoor tanning beds and sun lamps.”

People who are exposed to high levels of UV rays are at greater risk for skin cancer. The main types of UV rays that can affect your skin include UVA rays and UVB rays. However, there are no safe UV rays. While UVB rays have more energy and are a more potent cause of some skin cancers, both UVA and UVB rays can damage skin and cause skin cancer.

Skin cancers can show up on the skin in a range of colors, shapes, and sizes. It is important to keep an eye out for any new growth, bumps, or sores that don’t seem to heal, or any known spots that appear to be changing. Because it can be difficult to tell the difference between skin cancer and an ordinary mole, be sure to reach out to your health care provider if you notice anything that causes concern.

“Most of us would think adding some sunscreen a couple times a day is enough, and even though it is a good start there are few more things we can all do to protect ourselves from the sun,” continues Minnick.

Stay Safe in the Sun

- Use sunscreen that has the proper sun protection factor (SPF) and reapply it every 2 hours.
- Wear coverings when outside such as hats, long sleeves, or pants.
- Seek shade.
- Avoid staying outside during the peak sun hours from 10 am to 4 pm.

For more information on skin cancer visit [cdc.gov/skin-cancer](https://www.cdc.gov/skin-cancer) or call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook, You Tube, and Instagram or view the website at www.swhealth.ne.gov which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health.

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