

For Immediate Release

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Trying to Look "Healthy" Is Killing Men

Berkeley, CA, March 2010 – Heading into spring break and summertime, there's hot news about skin cancer – and men.

This month's issue of the journal *Archives of Dermatology* features a study reminding us that skin cancer is the most common and most rapidly increasing cancer. But, it also reveals that skin cancer cases have reached epidemic proportions. **This is important news – especially for men, who are twice as likely to die from melanoma.**

Far more middle-aged and older men than women are diagnosed with melanoma at an advanced stage and with a poor prognosis. But, Dr. Will Courtenay, a men's health expert, asserts that melanoma among men is preventable. In fact, melanoma is 95% curable when discovered early.

"Not using sun protection, not doing self-exams and not seeing a doctor regularly is a deadly combination for men," Courtenay says. In fact, death rates for melanoma are increasing only in men, but not women.

"Compounding the problem," he adds, "is that fact that far more American men than women believe that people look better – and healthier – with a tan. Men are paying a terrible price for that 'rugged,' 'healthy' look."

Melanoma causes about three fourths of all skin cancer-associated deaths, and two of three melanoma deaths are male. The increase in melanoma among men is higher than that of any other cancer.

Despite their high risks, men are less knowledgeable than women about skin cancer. The problem with this lack of knowledge is that people with less knowledge are less likely to protect themselves from the sun.

Although skin cancer can be prevented, compared to women, men in the United States are 1½ to 4 times less likely to

- avoid direct sunlight – especially midday sun
- wear sunscreen
- wear hats and other protective clothing

These gender differences significantly increase men's risk of skin cancer. Men are also more likely to get sunburns, which doubles their risk of melanoma.

“Men need to really ‘get’ that they’re at risk for skin cancer,” Courtenay says. “Despite their greater risk, they’re less likely than women to think they're at risk for skin cancer. And, people who don’t think they’re at risk, are less likely to use sun protection or to check their bodies for signs of skin cancer.”

TIPS

Here's what a man can do:

- #1: Get real. Acknowledging your real risk will actually reduce your risk.
- Get the facts. Just learning about your risks – and how you can protect yourself – will improve his chances of staying healthy.
- Do monthly self-exams, preferably with someone else like a partner, and know your A, B, C, and D's – moles that are Asymmetrical or uneven, Borders that are irregular, Color that’s uneven or varies, and Diameter that’s larger than a pencil eraser.
- Avoid sun exposure during mid-day hours of 10 am to 4 pm, reapply sunscreen frequently, and see a doctor each year for an exam.

Dr. Will Courtenay, “The Men’s Doc,” is an internationally recognized expert in helping men and fathers, a psychotherapist, distinguished researcher and author, radio host, and author of the upcoming book, *Dying to Be Men*.

For more information, visit: www.MensDoc.com

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