

# *Melanoma & Skin Cancer*

## AWARENESS MONTH TOOLKIT



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Public Health



Comprehensive  
Cancer Control  
Collaborating to Conquer Cancer  
— NORTH CAROLINA —

DERMATOLOGY SOLUTIONS  
OF NORTH CAROLINA CARES, INC.

## Introduction

The Skin Cancer Toolkit is a set of resources to support public health/health care providers and other professionals across the state of North Carolina. The resources in this toolkit are designed to help your agency/organization promote awareness of skin cancer and melanoma as well as develop strategies and/or interventions to reduce the skin cancer burden in our state. The following dates are opportunities to promote skin cancer awareness and prevention:

- May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month.
- The first Monday in May is Melanoma Monday.
- The Friday before Memorial Day is National Don't Fry Day.
- November is National Healthy Skin Month.

This toolkit is designed for any agency or organization to adapt or use in their community. Consider using the toolkit in the following ways to bring awareness and change to reduce the number of diagnoses and deaths related to skin cancer.

- Create a melanoma and skin cancer messaging campaign to educate residents about the importance of skin cancer prevention, screening, and treatment.
- Create a healthy skin month messaging campaign to educate residents about the importance of skin cancer prevention, screening, and treatment.
- Strengthen relationships with community stakeholders to support skin cancer initiatives
- Establish a policy, system, and/or environmental change supporting skin cancer prevention, screening, or treatment.
- Implement evidence-based skin cancer interventions.

The NC Cancer Prevention and Control Branch serves as a resource and guide for your efforts to help reduce the burden of skin cancer and cancer-related health disparities in North Carolina. Additional strategies and best practices can be found in the [2025-2030 NC Cancer Plan](#) (PDF). The NC Comprehensive Cancer Control Program Resource Hub provides additional cancer and cancer survivorship resources and promotional materials that can be downloaded, ordered and/or shipped free of charge.

For more information or additional resources,  
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# **MELANOMA & SKIN CANCER PROGRAM PRIORITIES**

## Melanoma & Skin Cancer Prevention

Skin cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in North Carolina and the United States. According to the 2022 U.S. Cancer Statistics, North Carolina ranked 14th among the states with the highest rate of skin cancer in the nation. The North Carolina Central Cancer Registry estimated that 3,903 people would be diagnosed with melanoma skin cancer, and 315 people would die from melanoma skin cancer in 2025. The community need for skin cancer prevention is both a health and economic matter for our state.

According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, one in five Americans will develop skin cancer by the age of 70. More than two people died of skin cancer every hour in the U.S. in 2023. Additionally, the annual cost of treating skin cancers in the U.S. is estimated at \$8.1 billion: about \$4.8 billion for non-melanoma and \$3.3 billion for melanoma skin cancers.

Skin cancer prevention requires a comprehensive approach to protecting yourself from harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. Every North Carolinian can follow a simple rule of: 'slip, slop, slap, seek and slide on sun protection' to reduce their risk for cancer. That is:

- 'Slip' on protective clothing,
- 'Slop' on a broad-spectrum ultraviolet A (UVA)/ultraviolet B (UVB) sunscreen of at least a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30,
- 'Slap' on a broad brimmed hat,
- 'Seek' shade or a sun protective dwelling or umbrella especially between 10 am and 4 pm, and
- 'Slide' on UV-blocking sunglasses.

Along with these simple steps to help prevent exposure to UV rays, individuals should not get sunburned, avoid tanning, never use a tanning bed or other tanning devices. Additionally, keep newborns out of the sun and use sunscreen on babies over the age of 6 months. It is important for individuals to perform monthly self-examinations of their skin from head-to-toe. Also, see a dermatologist at least once a year for a professional skin exam.

### What does SPF mean?

SPF stands for Sun Protection Factor. The number tells how long the sun's UVB rays will take to redden an individual's skin if you apply the sunscreen exactly as directed compared with the amount of time without sunscreen. For example, if using an SPF 30 product properly, it will take 30 times longer to burn the skin than if no sunscreen was used. For tips on how to read a sunscreen label view the video at this link:

<https://youtu.be/HO05G4v5du0>.

## Choosing sunscreen:

- Look for a Broad-Spectrum Sunscreen:  
In the past, most sunscreens only included information on product labels about protection against UVB - the rays that cause sunburn, and not UVA - the rays that cause tanning and premature aging. Now that UVA dangers are well known, broad-spectrum sunscreen provides clear information on product labels about protection against both UVB and UVA. Broad spectrum sunscreens protect your skin from both UVA and UVB rays.
- Look for a water resistant and very water-resistant sunscreen: No sunscreen is waterproof; they all eventually wash off. Sunscreens labeled water resistant are tested to be effective for up to 40 minutes of swimming, while very water-resistant sunscreens stay effective for up to 80 minutes in the water.
- Look for a sunscreen with protection levels of SPF 30 or SPF 50: The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends a water-resistant, broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher for any extended outdoor activity.

## There are two types of sunscreens:



### Physical Sunscreen

Sits on top of the skin like a shield and deflects the sun's rays. This type of sunscreen is a good choice for sensitive skin. Look for these active ingredients: Zinc Oxide and/or Titanium Dioxide



### Chemical Sunscreen

Absorbs the sun's rays like a sponge. This type of sunscreen is great for general use and is easier to rub in without leaving a white residue. Look for one or more of these active ingredients: Oxybenzone, Avobenzone, Octisalate, Octocrylene, Homosalate, and Octinoxate



## When and Why should I apply sunscreen?

Sunscreen reduces the overall UV exposure and lowers a person's risk of skin cancer and sun damage. The best practice is to apply sunscreen every day. It should be applied every 30 minutes before going outside to allow the sunscreen to bind to the skin. Reapply every two hours and immediately after swimming or excessive sweating. Even when cloudy, up to 80 percent of the sun's UV radiation reaches the earth. Going unprotected on an overcast day can lead to skin damage.

## Where should I apply sunscreen?

Experts recommend applying sunscreen to the entire body before a person gets dressed for the day. That way the skin will be protected if the clothing shifts or layers are removed. At the very least, sunscreen should be used on every part of the body that is exposed to the sun, including those easy-to-miss spots: the tops of the ears, back of the neck, the scalp (on the part line), top of the feet and back of the knees.

## How much sunscreen should I use?

To get the full broad-spectrum protection out of the sunscreen, apply one ounce - about a shot glass full - to the entire body. Most people apply less than half of that amount, translating into reduced protection. With reapplication, a family of four should use one four-ounce bottle of sunscreen per person during a long day outdoors.

## KNOW THE 5 W'S (& H) OF SUNSCREEN

**WHO:** Everyone under the sun

**WHAT:** Broad-spectrum sunscreen SPF 30 or higher when spending time outdoors.

**WHEN:** Every day; 30 minutes prior to going outdoors. Reapply every two hours.

**WHERE:** All exposed skin.

**HOW:** One ounce (shot glass full) to entire body for each application.

**WHY:** Reduce your risk of skin damage and skin cancer!

## How to Perform a Skin Self-Exam.



Individuals should use a full-length mirror to examine their body.

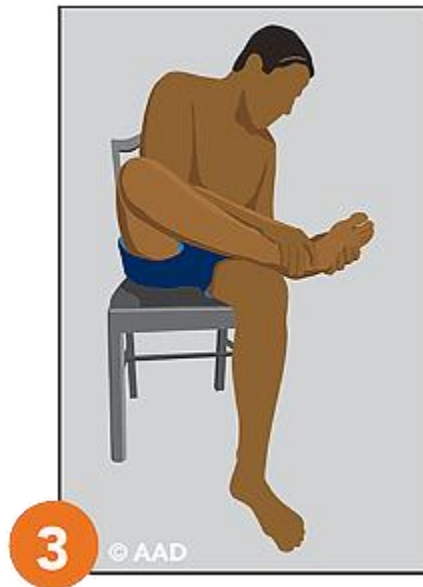
Examine the front and back of body in a full-length mirror. Women will need to lift their breast to check the skin underneath. Then look at the right and left sides with the arms raised.



Look at the underarms, forearms, and palms.

Bend elbows and look carefully at the forearms, underarms, fingernails, and palms.





**Look at the legs, between toes, and soles of the feet.**

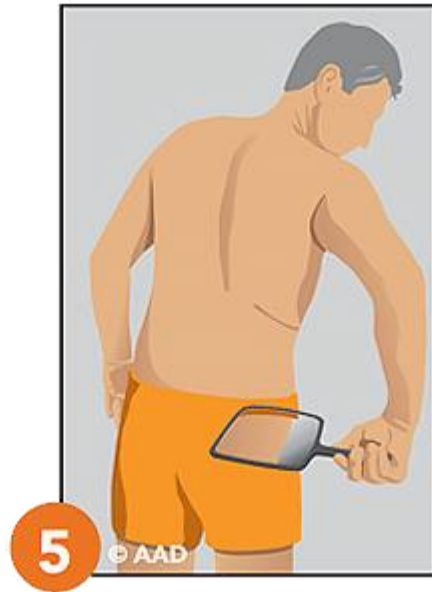
**Look at the backs of the legs and feet, the spaces between the toes, the toenails, and the soles of the feet.**



**Use a hand mirror to examine the neck, ears, and scalp.**

**Examine the back of the neck and scalp with a hand mirror.**

**Part the hair for a closer look at the scalp.**



**Use a hand mirror to check the back and buttocks.**

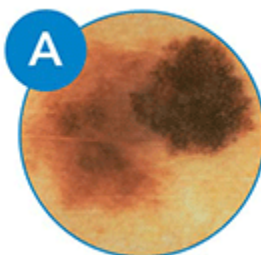
## Melanoma & Skin Cancer Early Detection

Skin cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in the U.S. According to the American Association of Dermatology, it affects one in five people by age 70. Most cases are treatable and curable if they are detected, diagnosed, and treated early on. When detected early, the 5-year survival rate for melanoma is 99 percent.

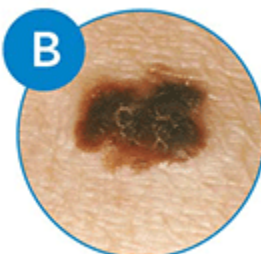
Skin cancer is the cancer people can visibly see. Early detection saves lives. Unlike cancers that develop inside the body, skin cancers form on the outside and are usually visible. That is why skin exams, both at home and with a dermatologist, are especially important. It is important for individuals to learn to look for and identify changes on their skin to detect possible cancer early. When cancer is found early it is easier to treat before it becomes dangerous, disfiguring, or deadly.

The first five letters of the alphabet are a guide to help people recognize the warning signs of melanoma: A, B, C, D, E:

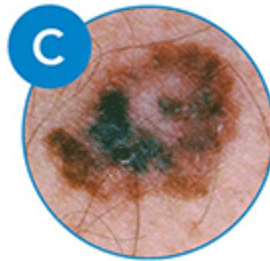
**A is for Asymmetry.** Most melanomas are asymmetrical. If a line is drawn through the middle of the lesion, the two halves don't match, it is asymmetrical, meaning it looks different from a round to oval and symmetrical common mole.



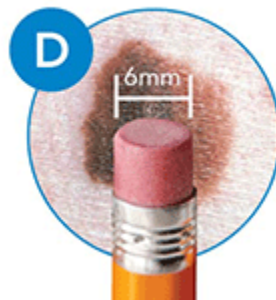
**B is for Border.** Melanoma borders tend to be uneven and may have scalloped or notched edges. Common moles tend to have smoother, more even borders.



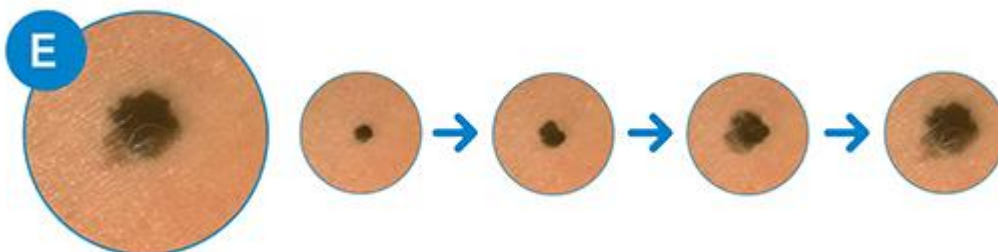
**C is for Color.** Multiple colors are a warning sign. While benign moles are usually a single shade of brown, a melanoma may have different shades of brown, tan or black. As it grows, the colors red, white or blue may also appear.



**D is for Diameter or Dark.** While it's ideal to detect a melanoma when it is small, it's a warning sign if a lesion is the size of a pencil eraser (about 6 mm, or ¼ inch in diameter) or larger. Some experts say it is important to look for any lesion no matter what size, that is darker than others. Although rare, amelanotic melanomas are colorless.



**E is for Evolving.** Any change in size, shape, color or elevation of a spot on the skin, or any new symptom in it, such as bleeding, itching or crusting, may be a warning sign of melanoma.

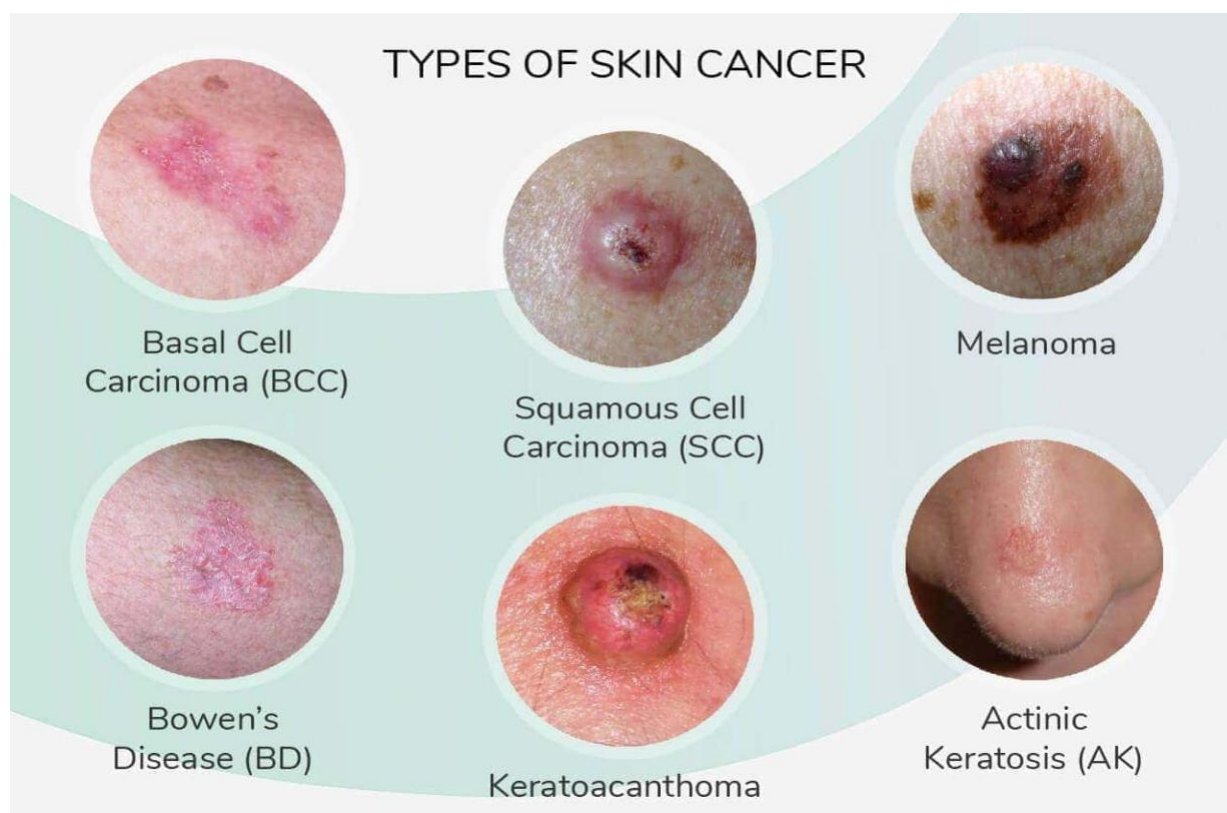


**Common nonmelanoma skin cancers are Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC) and Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC).**

**BCCs are the most common and the most frequent skin cancer.** BCCs can look like open sores, red patches, pink growths, shiny bumps, scars or growths with slightly elevated, rolled edges and/or a central indentation. At times, BCCs may ooze, crust, itch or bleed. The lesions commonly arise in sun-exposed areas of the body. In patients with darker skin, about half of BCCs are pigmented (meaning brown in color).

**SCC is the second most common form of skin cancer.** SCCs can appear as scaly red patches, open sores, rough, thickened or wart-like skin, or raised growths with a central depression. At times, SCCs may crust over, itch or bleed. The lesions most commonly arise in sun-exposed areas of the body. SCCs can also occur in other areas of the body, including the genitals.

There are other more rare skin cancers that are important to know about, because they may be mistaken for noncancerous conditions, such as Dermatofibrosarcoma, Merkel cell carcinoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, Sebaceous carcinoma, extramammary Paget's disease, and Microcystic adnexal carcinoma. To learn more about these disorders please see more at this source from the [Skin Cancer Foundation website](#).



## Melanoma & Skin Cancer Survivorship

Cancer survivorship begins at diagnosis and continues during treatment and through the rest of a person's life. Every cancer survivor's journey is different. There are resources to help individuals with skin cancer as well as their caregivers. People recovering from skin cancer are encouraged to stay healthy, such as protecting their skin from the sun, doing physical activity, eating well, managing stress, not smoking and limiting alcohol intake. Skin cancer survivors are encouraged to speak with their health care team to receive the best individual treatment and care plan.

### Palliative Care

Palliative care is specialized medical care for people living with serious illnesses. This type of care is focused on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of an illness. The goal is to improve the quality of life for both the patient and the family.

Palliative care is provided by a specially trained team of doctors, nurses and other specialists who work together with a patient's other doctors to provide an extra layer of support. Palliative care is based on the needs of the patient, not on the patient's prognosis. It is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness, and it can be provided along with curative treatment.

Palliative care specialists treat the symptoms and stress of illnesses such as cancer. The specialists work in close partnership with the patient's oncologist (cancer doctor). Any person, of any age, with any type or stage of cancer can benefit from palliative care – and the earlier, the better.

Palliative care is provided by a team. They know how to care for people with cancer when they are experiencing side effects and stress related to cancer and treatment. The side effects of treating cancer might include pain, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, anxiety, depression, constipation, diarrhea, confusion or shortness of breath. The palliative care team not only specializes in relieving side effects and stress of cancer, but they can also help with other situations, such as feeling overwhelmed by complicated medical information, or confusion and worry about making important treatment decisions.

Palliative care specialists have both the time and the expertise to interpret the complex information a person receives from the oncologist. They can help understand what it all means and how it affects the individual under care and treatment.

The good news is that because palliative care teams specialize in dealing with the full range of cancer symptoms, they can provide solutions to improve a person's quality of life. They will help figure out what information you need to make an appropriate treatment choice. They will work with patients to identify their immediate concerns (i.e., worrying about chemotherapy or radiation, surgery, possible loss of hair, or life after treatment).

Team members can discuss and provide patient-centered care to assist individuals with identifying what they value most in life and weigh the effects of treatment versus the disease.

The best news is that studies show that people receiving palliative care may live longer. To learn more about palliative care, visit [Get Palliative Care website](#).

## Cancer Survivorship Care Plan

A [survivorship care plan](#) is a record of the patient's cancer and treatment history, as well as any checkups or follow-up tests scheduled in the future. It may also list possible long-term effects of treatments, and ideas for staying healthy. This plan helps patients and their health care providers stay informed and aligned on ongoing care. Bring the care plan to doctor visits.

The care plan should have appointments or timeframes for follow-up tests, and which doctors are responsible for the patient's care. Patients are encouraged to bring their care plan to each appointment and refer to it so test care will be performed on time.



The North Carolina Comprehensive Cancer Control Program created a [\*My Unexpected Journey: A journal for a challenging health diagnosis\*](#)(PDF) which [can be ordered for free through the Cancer Resource Hub](#). This journal is a tool for cancer survivors to record important information about their health history, current medicines, health care providers, treatments, health numbers, health tips, screenings, important names and numbers, and special instructions all in one place. This journal can be used in conjunction with the care plan so it should be taken with the survivors at their appointments.

## Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) Change

Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) changes support behavior change for large segments of people or entire populations. They create spaces for groups of individuals to consider making healthy choices. PSE strategies focus on the health of the population, while interventions focus on the health of individuals.

Policy change is a law, ordinance, resolution, regulation, or rule that encourages or discourages certain behavior. This policy can be a small policy or big policy. An example of a policy change is an organization adopting a sun safety policy that outlines the definition of skin cancer and rules/guidelines for employees to follow when exposed to sunlight.

System change is a change in how things are done in an organization, agency, institution, network, or setting. An example of a system change is incorporating sun safety curriculum at a worksite. Environmental change is a change in places where



people work, play, shop, worship, and learn. An example of an environmental change is adding sunscreen dispensers at a local park.

PSE changes can remove barriers to improve health behaviors. For example, an after-school program does not have shade in its outdoor play spaces. One solution is to have sunscreen available in every room in the facility. PSE changes can also help by limiting unhealthy behaviors. For example, after-school programs can use policies to limit the amount of screen time students have.

Organizations may want to implement PSE changes to improve health behaviors associated with skin cancer, but don't know where to start. NC Comprehensive Cancer Control Program staff are available to provide technical assistance. The [2025-2030 NC Cancer Plan](#) (PDF) has skin cancer PSE suggestions and related information. Additional skin cancer PSE change success stories and resources can be found on the [Center for Disease Prevention and Control website](#), [George Washington Cancer Center, Action 4 PSE Change website](#) and [IMPACT Melanoma](#)



## Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs)

Evidence-based interventions (EBIs) have proven to be effective in reducing the risk of skin cancer. EBIs are practices, procedures, programs or policies that have proved to be effective. An example: a beach community wants to increase sun protective behaviors. Training is provided to lifeguards, they post daily UV index, signage about skin protection (including clothing) and distribute free sunscreen. For a list of sun safety EBIs, look at the [2025-2030 NC Cancer Plan](#) (PDF) or visit the [National Cancer Institute website](#).

## Melanoma & Skin Cancer Health Equity

Skin cancer (melanoma, basal cell, and squamous cell) is the most diagnosed cancer in North Carolina. Melanoma accounts for just a small portion of the skin cancers diagnosed but is the most serious because it can spread to lymph nodes and distant organs. It is the only skin cancer tracked by the [North Carolina Central Cancer Registry](#). Information is not collected for basal and squamous cell cancers. The latest projections estimate that 3,903 people will be diagnosed with melanoma skin cancer and 315 people will die from melanoma skin cancer in 2025.

### North Carolina Melanoma Skin Cancer Rates by Age Group

The risk for developing melanoma skin cancer increases with age. This increased risk reflects long-term exposure to UV rays over a lifetime. According to the NC Central Cancer Registry, the incidence rate for the 45-64 age range is 44.5 per 100,000 population compared to 125.7 per 100,000 in the 65-plus age range in 2022. The mortality rate for the 45-64 age range is 2.3 per 100,000 compared to 10.9 per 100,000 for those over 65 years of age.

### North Carolina Melanoma Skin Cancer Rates by Gender

Both melanoma skin cancer incidence and mortality rates are higher in men than women. According to the NC Central Cancer Registry, the incidence rate for men was 37.9 per 100,000 population and for women 25.3 per 100,000 in 2021. North Carolina men (3.1 per 100,000) have a higher melanoma cancer mortality rate than North Carolina women (1.2 per 100,000). The higher rates in men may be attributed to differences in occupational and recreational exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

### North Carolina Melanoma Skin Cancer Rates by Race/Ethnicity

Both melanoma skin cancer incidence and mortality rates are higher in whites than all other races/ethnicities. According to the NC Central Cancer Registry, whites had an incidence rate of 38.7/100,000 followed by Hispanics (6.3/100,000), American Indians (4.9/100,000) and African Americans (0.7/100,000) in the period of 2019-2023. The Asian population incidence rate data is suppressed, due to the low number of cases (cancer death rates fewer than 16). Whites had a mortality rate of 2.8/100,000 followed by Hispanics (0.7/100,000) and African Americans (0.3/100,000). The other races do not have a mortality rate because it is suppressed due to the low number of cases (cancer death rates fewer than 16).

## ***African Americans***

The African American population is often diagnosed at a later stage and/or diagnosed with more aggressive types of melanomas. For instance, a study found that the average five-year melanoma survival rate is only 67% for Black individuals, compared to 92% for white individuals.<sup>2</sup> According to the Melanoma Research Alliance, people of color are more likely to develop rare melanoma subtypes not caused by sun exposure and have lesions that may appear on the palms of the hand, soles of the feet and under or around the nail beds. Data collected by The Skin Cancer Foundation shows that skin cancers in people of color can be more difficult to detect because they often appear in less-exposed areas. Furthermore, African Americans consider their risk of getting skin cancer to be low due to having a darker skin tone and/or lack of family history. The use of sunscreen was linked to beauty and attractiveness rather than reducing skin cancer risk.<sup>1</sup>

## ***American Indians***

Similar to other racial and ethnic groups, skin cancer among the American Indian population often goes undiagnosed until more advanced stages. Due to limited access to health care services and dermatologists on their reservations, American Indians may not have the opportunities to learn about the causes of skin cancer. To improve melanoma outcomes for American Indians, there is a need for culturally tailored education on skin cancer as well as understanding the impact of colonization on the presentation of different skin tones among American Indians and Alaskan Natives.<sup>1</sup>

## ***Asian/Pacific Islander***

The Asian/Pacific Islander population is diagnosed less frequently with skin cancer compared to white people, but they are more likely to be diagnosed at later stages and often have poor survival rates once diagnosed. The Asian/Pacific Islander population is more likely to seek shade and wear long-sleeved clothing but has lower rates of sunscreen use compared to white people. Additionally, there are differences in skin cancer risk and occurrence between subgroups. This may be attributed to differences in cultural practices, skin types and their reaction to UV rays, and perceptions of skin color. For example, Asian Indian individuals were less likely to apply sunscreen or wear hats compared to Chinese individuals. Furthermore, sun protective behaviors and attitudes may differ depending on where an individual grew up. Acculturation to living in the U.S. and exposure to social norms may increase one's desire to tan. Acculturation is an individual's adoption of attitudes, norms and behaviors from multiple cultures. Asian/Pacific Islanders may prefer lighter skin tones due to colorism, which is a form of discrimination that assigns lighter skin tone with privilege and is associated with colonialism and internalized racism.<sup>1</sup>

## ***Hispanics***

The Hispanic population is younger at diagnosis, present with later stages of disease and have lower survival rates compared to white people (Perez, 2019). This may be attributed to misbeliefs about the risks and benefits of skin cancer prevention, lack of linguistic or culturally appropriate screening efforts and lower use of sun-safety practices due to acculturation. Hispanic individuals adapting to life in the U.S. may

participate in social norm behaviors that can increase their risk of skin cancer, such as lower rates of sunscreen use, sunbathing and indoor tanning.

Furthermore, Hispanic people make up a large proportion of workers in outdoor occupations, such as landscaping, construction and farming. Hispanic day laborers reported experiencing one or more sunburns and symptoms of heat illness when working in the summer, both of which increases their risk of skin cancer.<sup>1</sup>

## **LGBTQ+**

Skin cancer (including basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma) is one of the top five most common cancers among LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, queer) people. Sexual minority men (SMM), men who identify as gay or bisexual, are twice as likely to have skin cancer and are six times more likely to report using indoor tanning compared with heterosexual men. Motivations for indoor tanning were primarily related to one's appearance, where tanned skin is perceived as more physically appealing. On the other hand, sexual minority women reported lower or equal rates of both indoor tanning and skin cancer compared with heterosexual women.

Skin cancer prevalence and indoor tanning behaviors vary by sexual orientation among LGBTQ people. One study found that indoor tanning salons were more likely to be in neighborhoods with higher concentrations of male-male partnered households, possibly contributing to the increased use of indoor tanning in this population. Public health efforts predominately addressing skin cancer risk behaviors in young women may be overlooking SMM, a newly identified high-risk population for skin cancer.<sup>1</sup> Certain groups experience higher rates of melanoma and skin cancer, along with differences in survival. These disparities are influenced by many factors, such as social conditions, behavior, biology, and communication challenges. The GW Cancer Center's Cancer Control TAP Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month Campaign highlight these disparities and underscores the importance of tailoring prevention and communication efforts to the needs of each group.

### Reference:

1. GW Cancer Center; Cancer Control TAP. Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month Campaign.

<https://cancercontroltap.org/news/melanoma-and-skin-cancer-awareness-month-campaign>.

2. Okobi OE, Abreo E, Sams NP, Chukwuebuni OH, Tweneboa Amoako LA, Wiredu B, Uboh EE, Ekechi VC, Okafor AA. **Trends in Melanoma Incidence, Prevalence, Stage at Diagnosis, and Survival: An Analysis of the United States Cancer Statistics (USCS) Database.** *Cureus*. 2024 Oct 2;16(10):e70697. doi: 10.7759/cureus.70697. PMID: 39493095; PMCID: PMC11529802.

# **SKIN CANCER COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS**



## Sample Melanoma & Skin Cancer Awareness Month Article

(*Organization Name*) recognizes May as Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month. Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States, with melanoma being the third most common. Melanoma is the most serious type of skin cancer. It begins in the cells that give your skin color, called melanocytes. Melanomas often occur in areas of sun exposure but can happen anywhere on the body. Often the first sign of melanoma is a change in the size, shape, color, or feel of a mole. It is projected that 3,903 people living in North Carolina will be diagnosed with melanoma and 315 will die from melanoma in 2025.<sup>1</sup>

The warm May weather encourages people to spend more time outdoors. Too much ultraviolet radiation from the sun and indoor tanning booths can increase your risk of getting skin cancer.

To help lower your risk of developing melanoma and other skin cancers:

- Seek shade when possible.
- Use sunscreen (SPF of 30 or higher).
- Wear appropriate clothing (sunglasses, hat, long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and skirts) when possible.
- Avoid tanning beds.
- Check your skin for all the spots (moles, freckles, and age spots) on your body. If you notice any new or changing spots, contact a healthcare provider.
- Know your family history of skin cancer.<sup>2</sup>

Talk with a doctor about your risk factors for skin cancer. There is no screening test for skin cancer. Therefore, it is encouraged to perform a monthly self-examination of your skin from head-to-toe to look for changes on your skin. Also, see a dermatologist at least once a year for a professional skin exam. For more information about melanoma and skin cancer, (insert your contact information).

### References:

1. Cancer Statistics and Reports 2025 | NC SCHS. <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/cancer.cfm>.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Skin Cancer | CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/>.



## Sample Melanoma & Skin Cancer Awareness Month Proclamation

Below is a proclamation template that can be customized to reach a local audience. It provides an opportunity to elevate skin cancer awareness with local elected leaders and promote awareness in the community.

Melanoma (skin cancer) county level data can be found on the [NC State Center for Health Statistics website](#) under [Cancer Statistics and Reports website](#) in the **Cancer Incidence Rates and Cancer Mortality Rates annual** report links. Then under **All Counties by Specified Site** column, click on the PDF file below.

### SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH A SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

**(For local governments) WHEREAS**, skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, individuals living in North Carolina were diagnosed with melanoma- the deadliest type of skin cancer-at a rate of 28.5 per 100,000 population from 2019 through 2023, and died from melanoma at a rate of 2.2 per 100,000 population; and

**WHEREAS**, it is estimated that XX people in XXXX County, North Carolina were diagnosed with melanoma (skin cancer) and XX people in XXXX County, North Carolina died from melanoma (skin cancer) between 2019 and 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, the white population is diagnosed with and die from melanoma, the deadliest type of skin cancer, far more than all minority populations combined in the state. White males have a much higher incidence and mortality rate from melanoma than white females. Due to recent trends, Non-Hispanic Black population are more likely to get melanoma, even in sun-protected areas, and to be diagnosed at a later stage; and

**WHEREAS**, skin cancer is also considered one of the most preventable cancers, and people can actively reduce their risk of skin cancer by applying sunscreen, wearing sun protective clothing and sunglasses, seeking shade, avoiding tanning devices and other artificial sources of UV radiation, performing monthly self-examinations, and visiting a dermatologist yearly; and

**WHEREAS**, the first Monday in May is Melanoma Monday and the Friday before Memorial Day is *National Don't Fry Day*. Both days are designed to raise awareness of skin cancer as well as encouraging individuals to protect their skin, especially as the summer months begin. It is an opportunity for all people to make a lifetime commitment to practice sun safety; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of North Carolina encourages people to protect themselves and their families against over exposure to UV light from the sun or tanning beds, and to promote sun safety awareness and education in our communities;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I**, (Local Elected Leader Name/Title) do hereby proclaim May 20XX, “**SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH**” in XXXX County and commend its observance to all citizens.

## Sample Melanoma & Skin Cancer Awareness Month Social Media

Below are examples of social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, and/or Twitter) messaging and website links that can be used to promote, engage and educate individuals and communities about Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month in May. Communication surrounding skin cancer should consider health literacy, health equity, and encourage prevention, early detection, and survivorship. Check out the George Washington Cancer Center [Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month Campaign](#) for even more social graphics and more

### Sample Social Media Posts

1. For people of color, when skin cancer develops in non-sun-exposed areas, it's often in a late stage when diagnosed. Luckily, you can find #skincancer early. Check out these tips: <https://bit.ly/3dwS59o>
2. What are some of the signs of #melanoma? This guide from @CDCgov can help you assess changes in your skin: <https://www.cdc.gov/skin-cancer/symptoms/>
3. #CompCancer professionals: Looking for PSE change solutions to prevent skin cancer? Start here: <https://bit.ly/2Vj04Ob> #MelanomaAwareness
4. Communities across the country are finding innovative ways to reduce the burden of skin cancer and melanoma. Explore their stories and learn more: <https://www.cdc.gov/skin-cancer/stories/>
5. Exercising or being outside is great, but don't forget your sun protection! <https://www.cdc.gov/skin-cancer>
6. What can you do to reduce your risk of skin cancer, including #melanoma? Get some tips: <https://www.cdc.gov/skin-cancer>
7. Share your #SunSafeSelfie and join the conversation to raise awareness on the benefits of sun protection! <https://www.cdc.gov/skin-cancer/sunsaferselfie/>
8. The Friday before Memorial Day is "Don't Fry Day!" Help us raise awareness and reduce the rates of skin cancer, including melanoma: <https://www.epa.gov/sunsafety/dont-fry-day>
9. Melanoma Monday is May #th this year! Wear your best black attire and head out to spread awareness of #melanoma and #skincancer! Take the time to learn about ways to prevent melanoma: <https://www.aad.org/public/public-health/awareness-campaigns/skin-cancer-awareness-month>

#### Reference:

GW Cancer Center; Cancer Control TAP. Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month Campaign. <https://cancercontroltap.org/news/melanoma-and-skin-cancer-awareness-month-campaign>.

## Sample National Healthy Skin Month Article

(*Organization Name*) recognizes November as National Healthy Skin Month. The purpose of this awareness month is to promote healthy skin care habits and the awareness of skin conditions and diseases, such as melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer. According to the American Academy of Dermatology, one in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.

Practice sun safety and healthy skin behaviors by doing the activities below:

- A consistent, daily skin care routine (cleanser, toner, moisturizer, and sunscreen). <sup>1</sup>
- Use sunscreen (SPF of 30 or higher).
- Seek shade when possible.
- Wear appropriate clothing (sunglasses, hat, long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and skirts) when possible.
- Avoid tanning beds.
- Check your skin for all the spots (moles, freckles, and age spots) on your body. If you notice any new or changing spots, contact a health care provider.
- Know your family history of skin cancer. <sup>2</sup>

Talk with a doctor about your healthy skin practices, sun safety behaviors, and risk factors for skin cancer. There is no screening test for skin cancer. Therefore, it is encouraged to perform a monthly self-examination of your skin from head to toe to look for changes on your skin. Also, see a dermatologist at least once a year for a professional skin exam.

For more information about healthy skin month, (insert your contact information).

### References:

1. American Academy of Dermatology. <https://www.aad.org/>.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Skin Cancer | CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/>.

## Sample National Healthy Skin Month Proclamation

Below is a proclamation template that can be customized to reach a local audience. It provides an opportunity to elevate skin cancer awareness with local elected leaders and promote awareness in the community.

Melanoma (skin cancer) county level data can be found on the [NC State Center for Health Statistics website](#) under [Cancer Statistics and Reports website](#) in the **Cancer Incidence Rates** and **Cancer Mortality Rates** annual report links. Then under **All Counties by Specified Site** column, click on the PDF file below.

### NATIONAL HEALTHY SKIN MONTH A SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

**(For local governments) WHEREAS**, November is National Skin Month. The purpose of this awareness month is to promote healthy skin care habits and the awareness of skin conditions and diseases, such as melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer; and

**WHEREAS**, The skin is the body's largest organ so it's important to take good care of it by cleansing the body daily, focusing on using protective clothing and sunglasses to shield your skin and eyes from the harmful effects of UV from the sun. It is also important to seek shade and wear a broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen with protection levels of SPF 30 or SPF 50.

**WHEREAS**, individuals should moisturize their skin daily and examine their skin monthly for new or unusual spots that are changing, itching or bleeding which then is recommended to see a board-certified dermatologist for a skin cancer check."

**WHEREAS**, it is estimated that XX people in XXXX County, North Carolina were diagnosed with melanoma (skin cancer) and XX people in XXXX County, North Carolina died from melanoma (skin cancer) between 2019 and 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of North Carolina encourages people to protect themselves and their families against sun damage, and to promote sun safety awareness and education as well as healthy skin practices in our communities;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, (Local Elected Leader Name/Title) do hereby proclaim November 2024, **"NATIONAL HEALTHY SKIN MONTH"** in XXXX County and commend its observance to all citizens.

## Sample National Healthy Skin Month Social Media

Below are examples of social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, and/or Twitter) messaging and website links that can be used to promote, engage and educate individuals and communities about National Healthy Skin Month in November. Communication surrounding skin cancer prevention and early detection should consider health literacy and health equity.

### Sample Social Media Posts

1. Tanning your skin – in the sun or in a tanning bed – damages your skin. Over time, this damage can lead to prematurely aged skin (e.g., wrinkles and uneven skin color), and, in some cases, skin cancer: <https://www.skincancer.org/risk-factors/tanning/>
2. Tips for maintaining healthy skin, hair and nails can be found from the AAD's magazine Healthy Skin: <https://www.aad.org/public/skin-healthy-magazine>
3. Do the #SkinCheckChallenge! Check skin head to toe, share it online with the #SkinCheckChallenge, and tag 2 friends to do the same! <https://www.skincancer.org/get-involved/skin-cancer-awareness-month/>
4. To follow along with the AAD use the #YourHealthiestSkin for tips and resources on this month [https://www.instagram.com/p/CHGE\\_JoFA84/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CHGE_JoFA84/)

#### References:

1. GW Cancer Center; Cancer Control TAP. Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month Campaign. <https://cancercontroltap.org/news/melanoma-and-skin-cancer-awareness-month-campaign>.
2. American Academy of Dermatology. <https://www.aad.org/>.

## Resources

A Statewide Call to Action to Reduce Cancer in North Carolina: 2025-2030 North Carolina Cancer Plan. <https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/chronic-disease-and-injury/cancer-prevention-and-control/nc-cancer-plan-2025-2030/download?attachment>

American Academy of Dermatology Association. 2026. <https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/skin-cancer>.

American Cancer Society. 2026. Skin Cancer. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/skin-cancer.html>.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2026. Skin Cancer. <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/>.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2022. Skin Cancer Resources to Share. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/skin-cancer/resources/>

Dermatology Solutions of NC Cares, Inc. <https://www.dsnccares.org/>.

Don't Fry Day. 2026. National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention. <https://www.epa.gov/sunsafety/dont-fry-day>

George Washington Cancer Center; Action 4 PSE Change. <https://cancercontroltap.org/policy-systems-and-environmental-change>.

George Washington Cancer Center; Cancer Control Technical Assistance Portal. March 2022. Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month Campaign. <https://cancercontroltap.org/news/melanoma-and-skin-cancer-awareness-month-campaign>. [Accessed 25 March 2024]

NCDHHS DPH: NC Advisory Committee on Cancer Coordination and Control. 2026. <https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/chronic-disease-and-injury/cancer-prevention-and-control-branch/nc-advisory-committee-cancer-coordination-and-control>.

NCDHHS DPH: NC Cancer Prevention and Control Branch. 2026. <https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/chronic-disease-and-injury/cancer-prevention-and-control-branch>.

NCDHHS DPH: NC Comprehensive Cancer Control Program Resource Hub. 2026. <https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs/chronic-disease-and-injury/cancer-prevention-and-control-branch/nc-comprehensive-cancer-control-program-resource-hub>

NCDHHS DPH: NC State Center for State Statistics. North Carolina Cancer Statistics and Reports. Available at: <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/cancer.cfm> [Accessed 25 March 2026].

National Institute of Environmental Health Services; National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety and Health Training. October 2022. <https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/>.

Skin Cancer Foundation 2026. Skin Cancer Awareness Toolkit. Available at: <https://www.skincancer.org/get-involved/skin-cancer-awareness-month/toolkit/>.

Sun Safety Evidence-Based Programs Listing. 2026. Available at: <https://ebccp.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/topicPrograms.do?topicIdL=102269&choice=default>.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES CONTACT:

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