

Oncology News



....*More than medicine*

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Thomas P. Trezona, M.D., F.A.C.S.
(541) 302-6469

Comprehensive
Cancer Care
Integrating Mind,
Body, and Spirit

Cascade Surgical Oncology, PC provides personalized care to our patients and their families in a healthy and nurturing environment. With compassion, courage, and respect, we honor diversity and celebrate life. Support, hope, listening, laughter and touch all intertwine with our care.

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Throwback Thursday??...How about “Melanoma Monday” and “Don’t Fry-Day”

By Diana M. Seaders, PA-C

“Throwback Thursday”; we’ve come a long way since the 1950s when women would apply baby oil and lay out in the sun for hours to get a “healthy tan”.

Although we are now aware of the increased risk of skin cancer with tanning, there are other key components in the fight against skin cancer and melanoma. May is Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month and it encompasses days with similar messages such as Melanoma Monday (May 5th) and Don’t Fry Day (May 23rd).

Our team at Cascade Surgical Oncology would like to provide a friendly reminder that it is crucial to be screening patients for skin malignancies, as well as educating patients how to perform thorough self-skin exams at home and take other preven-

tative measures in the name of good health.

No Sun Required!

As you might recall from our most recent newsletter, melanoma does not need

sun to occur. Keep in mind that it can arise anywhere in the body, such as under nails, in between toes, mucous membranes such as lips or genitalia, or even intraocularly.



Use the ABCDE Rule – Don’t Forget the E

The ABCDE mnemonic is a helpful guide, as it has an extremely high sensitivity and specificity rate when all the criteria are used together. Remember, sometimes a skin



lesion may look completely benign but can be cancerous. We have seen that the *rate of change over time*, more than anything else, is key to identifying a dangerous skin lesion. Sensory symptoms, such as burning or itching, can be red flags as well.

Not Just About Skin

Perhaps another important reminder for patients is that preventing and screening for melanoma is not just about protecting the skin. Favorite places for melanoma to metastasize are the brain, liver and the lungs. This knowledge may serve as a

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CASCADE
SURGICAL ONCOLOGY, PC

3783 International Court, Suite 200
Springfield, OR 97477

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wake-up call for those who love to sunbathe or use tanning beds.

Skin Exams at Home

It is imperative for patients to have skin exams performed in clinic but to also be conducting regular self-skin checks at home, especially those with higher risk factors such as being Caucasian, having light-colored or red hair, a history of sunburns especially early in life, a history of indoor tanning, or those who have a large number of moles. Research shows that at least 25% of melanomas arise from existing nevi. Learning how to do a good skin exam requires some training. Ideally, patients should have a partner or friend help to assess the hard to see areas, or to use a mirror.

There are resources which can be very helpful for patients to track new spots, and monitor existing moles for change. For example, there are many good body maps available on the Internet. The following is a link to a free PDF "DETECT Skin Cancer: Body Mole Map" provided by the American Academy of Dermatology. <http://www.aad.org/File%20Library/Global%20navigation/For%20the%20public/aad-body-mole-map.pdf>

Enjoy the Outdoors, Safely!

Continue to remind patients of the importance of wearing high levels of SPF sunscreen and hats. There are even special clothing on the market designed with UPF: Ultraviolet Protection Factor to specifically protect against UV rays. We hope that "Melanoma Monday" and "Don't Fry-Day" spark a productive discussion between you and your patients, with the goal of identifying skin lesions early on or preventing skin cancers altogether.

If you have questions or note a concerning skin lesion on any of your patients, please feel free to call our office.