



69th ANNUAL MEETING

New Orleans, La. • February 4-8, 2011

DATA SHOW INCIDENCE OF SKIN CANCER RISING AT ALARMING RATE

Dermatologists warn spring breakers, young people to practice proper sun protection to reduce risk of future skin cancers

NEW ORLEANS (Feb. 4, 2011) – For many young adults, the serious health consequences of tanning have been shown to have little impact on their behavior when it comes to sun exposure. But with spring break around the corner, dermatologists are urging people -- particularly young adults -- to practice proper sun protection and understand the importance of early detection of skin cancer, the most common type of cancer.

Speaking today at the 69th Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Dermatology (Academy), dermatologist Brett M. Coldiron, MD, FAAD, clinical associate professor of dermatology at the University of Cincinnati in Cincinnati, Ohio, presented new statistics pointing to an increase in non-melanoma skin cancer and why young people are at an increased risk of developing this disease.

Dr. Coldiron reported that in a recent analysis of Medicare claims, data showed that treatment performed for non-melanoma skin cancers in the United States nearly doubled from 1994 to 2006. Specifically, the total number of new non-melanoma skin cancers in 2006 was estimated to be more than 3.5 million.

“While the American Cancer Society estimates more than 2 million new skin cancers will be diagnosed this year, our research shows that the annual incidence in 2008 could actually have been 3.7 million,” said Dr. Coldiron. “This is especially troubling as our estimate only includes Medicare patients, which means this could be even higher when young people are included in the count.”

While both basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas can be easily treated if detected early, Dr. Coldiron noted that the long-established culture of tanning for the sake of vanity often includes annual spring break vacations to sunny climates that glamorize tanning. The fact is that ultraviolet (UV) light exposure (both natural and artificial) has been proven to be the most preventable risk factor for skin cancer.

- more -

American Academy of Dermatology

930 East Woodfield Road • Schaumburg, Illinois 60173-4729 • Main: 847.330.0230 • Fax: 847.330.8907 • Website: www.aad.org

“As dermatologists, we know that it is hard to change behavior, even in the face of proven scientific evidence,” said Dr. Coldiron. “Attitudes about tanning are no different, as studies have shown that even though people know that overexposure to ultraviolet light can lead to skin cancer, they still tan. We need young people to realize that tanning for cosmetic reasons now will ultimately negatively affect their appearance later and even increase their risk for skin cancer.”

To minimize your risk of skin cancer, the Academy recommends that everyone Be Sun Smart®:

- **Generously apply a broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen** with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 30 to all exposed skin. “Broad-spectrum” provides protection from both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays. Re-apply every two hours, even on cloudy days, and after swimming or sweating.
- **Wear protective clothing**, such as a long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, where possible.
- **Seek shade** when appropriate, remembering that the sun's rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. If your shadow is shorter than you are, seek shade.
- **Protect children from sun exposure** by playing in the shade, wearing protective clothing, and applying sunscreen.
- **Use extra caution near water, snow and sand** as they reflect the damaging rays of the sun which can increase your chance of sunburn.
- **Get vitamin D safely** through a healthy diet that may include vitamin supplements. Don't seek the sun.
- **Avoid tanning beds.** Ultraviolet light from the sun and tanning beds can cause skin cancer and wrinkling. If you want to look like you've been in the sun, consider using a UV-free self-tanning product, but continue to use sunscreen with it.
- **Check your birthday suit on your birthday.** If you notice anything changing, growing, or bleeding on your skin, see a dermatologist. Skin cancer is very treatable when caught early.

For more information about skin cancer, please visit the SkinCancerNet section of www.SkinCarePhysicians.com, a website developed by dermatologists that provides patients with up-to-date information on the treatment and management of disorders of the skin, hair and nails.

Headquartered in Schaumburg, Ill., the American Academy of Dermatology (Academy), founded in 1938, is the largest, most influential, and most representative of all dermatologic associations. With a membership of more than 16,000 physicians worldwide, the Academy is committed to: advancing the diagnosis and medical, surgical and cosmetic treatment of the skin, hair and nails; advocating high standards in clinical practice, education, and research in dermatology; and supporting and enhancing patient care for a lifetime of healthier skin, hair and nails. For more information, contact the Academy at 1-888-462-DERM (3376) or www.aad.org.

#

Jennifer Allyn
(847) 240-1730
jallyn@aad.org

Kara Jilek
(847) 240-1701
kjilek@aad.org

Allison Sit
(847) 240-1746
asit@aad.org