



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DERMATOLOGY ASKS, 'WHO'S GOT YOUR BACK?'

Find a partner for skin cancer prevention, detection

SCHAUMBURG, Ill. (May 4, 2015) — When it comes to skin cancer prevention and detection, your back should be at the front of your mind. While it's a hard area of the body to protect with sunscreen, it's also an important one, as the back is the most common location for melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. Research also has shown that thicker melanomas, which can require more advanced treatment, are more frequently found on parts of the body that can't easily be self-inspected, like the back.

In recognition of Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month[®] in May and Melanoma Monday[®], observed on May 4 this year, the American Academy of Dermatology (Academy) asks the public to consider "Who's Got Your Back?" when it comes to applying sunscreen and examining skin for suspicious spots.

PREVENTION

According to a 2015 online [survey](#) conducted by the Academy, 37 percent of people rarely or never apply sunscreen to their back when it's exposed to the sun, and 43 percent rarely or never ask someone else to help them apply sunscreen to their back. Men are more likely than women to rarely or never apply sunscreen to their back (40 percent versus 33 percent, respectively) and to rarely or never ask someone else for help (47 percent versus 40 percent, respectively).

"Before you head outside, it's important to apply a water-resistant, broad-spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor of 30 or higher to all exposed skin, including the back," says board-certified dermatologist Mark Lebwohl, MD, FAAD, president of the Academy. "Since applying sunscreen to your own back can be difficult, it's best to ask for someone else's help."

According to the survey, men are twice as likely as women to report that they wouldn't feel comfortable asking anyone to apply sunscreen to their back (10 percent versus 5 percent, respectively). If no one else were around to provide help with sunscreen, 14 percent of survey respondents would not take any action, like seeking shade or wearing protective clothing, to shield their back from the sun.

"Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the most preventable risk factor for all forms of skin cancer, including melanoma, so don't leave your back unprotected against the sun's harmful UV rays," Dr. Lebwohl says. "Find someone you're comfortable with — like a significant other, friend or relative — and ask them to apply sunscreen to your back. Or even better, stay in the shade and wear clothing that covers your back."

To emphasize the importance of sun protection on the back, the Academy released a "Who's Got Your Back?" [video](#) in conjunction with Melanoma Monday.[®]

News Release

DETECTION

Once you've found a partner for skin cancer prevention, it's time to consider who's got your back when it comes to skin cancer detection. Skin cancer is highly curable when detected early and treated properly, so it's important to check your skin for suspicious spots.

BY THE NUMBERS

According to an American Academy of Dermatology survey:

- **37 percent** of people rarely or never apply sunscreen to their back.
- **43 percent** of people rarely or never ask someone else to help them apply sunscreen to their back.
- **Only 36 percent** of people examine their back for signs of skin cancer at least once a year.
- **Only 35 percent** of people ask someone else to help them examine hard-to-see areas of their skin for signs of skin cancer.

According to the Academy's survey, 51 percent of men and 35 percent of women don't know how to examine their skin for signs of skin cancer. Only half of respondents said they perform skin self-exams at least once a year.

"Everyone should regularly examine their skin for signs of skin cancer," Dr. Lebwohl says. "If you notice any spots that are different from the others, or anything that's changing, itching or bleeding, make an appointment with a board-certified dermatologist."

The survey indicates that people are less vigilant about checking their back than the rest of their skin. Just 36 percent of survey respondents said they examine their back for signs of skin cancer at least once a year, and only 35 percent ask someone else to help them inspect hard-to-see areas.

"When you perform a skin self-exam, it's important to check your entire body, including your back," Dr. Lebwohl says. "It can be difficult to examine certain areas by yourself, including the back, so ask someone you trust, like a spouse or family member, to help you."

For more information about how to prevent and detect skin cancer, including instructions on how to perform a skin self-exam, visit the Academy website SpotSkinCancer.org. There, you can download a body mole map for tracking changes in your skin and find free SPOTme[®] skin cancer screenings in your area. SPOT Skin Cancer[™] is the Academy's campaign to create a world without skin cancer through public awareness, community outreach programs and services, and advocacy that promote the prevention, detection and care of skin cancer.

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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 18,000 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. Follow the Academy on [Facebook](#) (American Academy of Dermatology), [Twitter](#) (@AADskin) or [YouTube](#) (Academy of Dermatology).

About the Academy's Survey

The survey was conducted by Relevant Research Inc. of Chicago from Jan. 12 to 15, 2015. A total of 1,019 respondents completed the online survey. Data were weighted by sex, age, race/ethnicity and income according to the 2013 U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey for adults ages 18-64. The margin of sampling error at the 95 percent confidence level is ± 3.1 percent.