THE BURNING TRUTH ABOUT SUNSCREEN

As you head off to the beach or your favorite swimming pool this summer, you might want to read the label on your sunscreen product more carefully.

In 2013, the FDA began testing all sunscreen products for both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) protection. If they pass both, they’re now called “broad spectrum.” Only broad-spectrum sunscreens with an SPF of 15 or higher can claim to reduce skin cancer and early aging. Others can only say they help prevent sunburn. The words “waterproof,” “sweat-proof,” and “sunblock” are no longer allowed because they’re untrue.

Dermatologists recommend using a sunscreen with at least SPF 30. But no matter the SPF number, you should reapply every two hours whether you’re in or out of the water. Don’t forget to apply sunscreen even on a cloudy day as up to 80% of the sun’s rays pass through clouds. Babies under six months should be kept out of the sun.

Everyone needs sunscreen. In all races, basal cell carcinoma – the most common skin cancer – is usually due to sun exposure. Examine your skin on a regular basis for moles and suspicious spots, especially new ones. A mole or freckle that looks different from the others or has any characteristics of the following ABCDEs of melanoma should be checked by a dermatologist:

A is for Asymmetry – normal moles are symmetrical. Draw an imaginary line through the middle of a mole and compare the two halves.
B is for Border – observe the border or edges of the mole to see if they are ragged, blurred, or irregular. Melanoma lesions often have uneven borders.
C is for Color – a mole that does not have the same color throughout or that has shades of tan, brown, black, blue, white, or red is suspicious. Normal moles are usually a single shade of color.
D is for Diameter – a mole is suspicious if the diameter is larger than the eraser on a pencil.
E is for Evolving – a mole that is evolving -- shrinking, growing larger, changing color, or begins to itch or bleed -- should be checked. Melanoma lesions often grow in size or change in height rapidly.

A common location for melanoma in men is on the back, and in women, the lower leg. Check your scalp and neck and don’t forget the “hidden” areas between fingers and toes, the groin, soles of the feet, and backs of the knees.
Patient Testimonial

“Our experience with utilizing Connect Care3 for navigating the health care system was extremely positive. We have used them in three situations for my wife, Marian, and have found the following:

1. They provided excellent advice and information on various treatment options, not only verbally, but by giving us written information and descriptions on procedures and names of providers.
2. They met my wife at every doctor’s appointment and provided questions and acted as the patient advocate during the visit.
3. They kept detailed notes of all visits.
4. They got doctors who normally didn’t talk to each other to collaborate on treatment plans, both within and across health care systems.
5. On three occasions they eliminated redundant testing by making sure the information was available to all the physicians.
6. They provided information on pharmaceuticals and on which drugs had generics available, as well as information on their effectiveness.
7. They provided emotional support for my wife and helped ease her fears.
8. They reduced the number of doctor visits and doctors involved in the process of obtaining a diagnosis of a chronic pain issue, and reduced the amount of time between visits to get us to the solution in a lesser amount of time.

As a result of our association with ConnectCare3, we are better educated medical consumers, capable of handling most situations now. We are still utilizing them for Marian’s current problems, but now we can at least ask intelligent questions and handle most doctor visits by ourselves.

We are convinced that Marian would have undergone at least twice the amount of tests and doctor visits if ConnectCare3 wasn’t involved. This had to save our insurance company a substantial amount of money and should have reduced our utilization costs.

We would highly recommend them to any employee who is facing a complicated medical situation or is unfamiliar with the current health care system.

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--Gil Tunney
York, PA