



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Pam Crawford
913.541.4649
Pam.Crawford@USONCOLOGY.com

PROTECT YOUR SKIN! ***Kansas City Cancer Center Issues Skin Cancer Reminder***

KANSAS CITY – Memorial Day weekend serves as the unofficial launch of summer, as well as an annual reminder to protect against skin cancer. Now ranked as the most common form of cancer in the U.S., Kansas City Cancer Center (KCCC) is working to create awareness of this disease that affects more than one million Americans this year.

Despite the fact that non-melanoma skin cancer cases have risen from one million in 1987 to 3.5 million in 2009, it's one of the most preventable of cancers. Protection from the sun and other sources of ultraviolet (UV) radiation is important, according to KCCC Oncologist John Davis, M.D.

"More than 90 percent of skin cancers are caused by unnecessary exposure to the sun. Yet less than 33 percent of adults, teens and kids regularly wear sunscreen," says Davis.

UV rays are produced by the sun. They are invisible to the naked eye and are more intense in the summer, at higher altitudes, and in areas closer to the equator. Overexposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun, says Davis, causes sunburn (erythema), premature aging (skin wrinkling), cataracts (gradual clouding of the lens of the eye), immune system suppression, DNA damage, dilated blood vessels, and most importantly, skin cancer. Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer, he says, accounting for five percent of all skin cancers. In fact, Kansas and Missouri represent two of 10 U.S. states with the highest death rates from melanoma, according to SunWise, an environmental and health education program administered through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

"With skin cancer, it's important to get into the habit of doing self checks and tracking new or changes in existing moles," says Davis. "You should be taking note of any mole that is not symmetric, has a changing or irregular border, has

changes in color or multiple colors (red, white, and blue) or is increasing in diameter. Under any of those circumstances, you should consult your physician, as this could be a melanoma. Any new mole that develops after age 40 should also be examined by a physician.”

Finally, says Davis, the most important way for a person to lower his or her risk for skin cancer is to avoid exposure to UV radiation, either from the sun or other sources such as tanning lamps. KCCC recommends the following practices for sun safety:

- Protect skin with clothing, such as long sleeve shirts and hats with broad brim.
- Avoid being outdoors when the ultraviolet light is strongest, particularly between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Seek shade.
- Use sunscreen and lip balm with an SPF factor of 15 or more (even on hazy or overcast days). Sunscreen should be effective against both UVA and UVB rays. Frequent application is important (reapply 20 minutes after initial application), as some sunscreens are not water resistant and will wash off with swimming and degrade more quickly in hot temperatures.
- Wear wrap-around sunglasses with at least 99 percent UV absorption to provide the best protection for the eyes and the skin around the eyes.
- Avoid other sources of UV lights, such as tanning beds and sun lamps.
- Protect children from the sun by using the same precautions as adults.

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About Kansas City Cancer Center

Kansas City Cancer Center is a full-service hematology, medical oncology and radiation oncology practice with nine convenient locations encircling the Kansas City area. KCCC provides a wide range of patient support, including oncology treatment, diagnostic imaging, genetic risk evaluation and testing, access to clinical trials and survivorship wellness services. Its patient-driven mission is to equip individuals and their families with everything they need to battle the disease, manage their care and navigate financial issues of a cancer diagnosis – all from a close-to-home environment. To learn more about KCCC, visit www.KCCancercenter.com KCCC is a member of the US Oncology network, which supports the nation’s foremost cancer treatment and research network through evidence-based medicine and shared best practices.