



SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH MAY 2026 | QUICK FACTS

- The American Cancer Society estimates 1,120 Nevadans will be diagnosed with melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, and 100 will die of the disease this year. Thousands more will be diagnosed with basal cell or squamous cell carcinomas.
- More people are diagnosed with skin cancer each year in the U.S. than all other cancers combined, says the American Cancer Society.
- In Nevada, melanoma is the fifth most commonly diagnosed cancer in men and the sixth most commonly diagnosed cancer in women.
- Men in Nevada are more likely to be diagnosed with melanoma than women. The American Cancer Society estimates more than twice as many men than women will die of melanoma in Nevada this year.
- Melanoma is one of the most common cancers in people younger than 30.
- 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer by age 70, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation.
- About 90% of non-melanoma skin cancers are caused by exposure to UV radiation from the sun.

SKIN CANCER IN SKIN OF COLOR

- Melanomas in people with skin of color – Blacks, Asians, and native Hawaiians – most often occur on non-exposed skin with less pigment, such as palms, soles of feet, nailbeds and mucous membranes.
- People with skin of color, when diagnosed with melanoma, are more likely to have a late-stage diagnosis, meaning that the cancer is in a more advanced stage.

INDOOR TANNING AND CANCER

- According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, indoor tanning devices emit UV radiation in amounts 10-15 times higher than the sun at its peak intensity and are considered to be carcinogenic on the same level as cigarettes and plutonium.
- Any history of indoor tanning increases the risk of developing skin cancer. One study found women who have ever tanned indoors had a six-fold risk of developing melanoma in their 20s.

- The Skin Cancer Foundation also notes that more people develop skin cancer because of indoor tanning than develop lung cancer because of smoking.

PREVENTION

- Anyone can reduce their risk of skin cancer by following the 5 Ss of Sun Safety:
 - Slip on sun protective clothing, such as long pants and sleeves.
 - Slop on broad spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen and reapply at least every 2 hours.
 - Slap on a wide-brimmed hat to protect the ears, scalp, and face.
 - Seek shade or shelter, especially during peak sun hours between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
 - Slide of UV protective sunglasses.
- People should also avoid indoor tanning devices.

EARLY DETECTION

- Knowing one's own skin and checking it regularly from head to toe can help them to identify changes that could be cancerous or pre-cancerous. Using a handheld mirror and a friend or partner to check hard to see places (such as the back and scalp) can be done once a month.
- When checking one's skin, look for the ABCDEFs in moles:
 - Asymmetry: When drawing a line through, both sides should match.
 - Border: Uneven, jagged or irregular borders could be a sign of cancer.
 - Color: Moles that have a variety of colors or change color over time should be checked by a doctor.
 - Diameter: Moles that are larger than 6mm in diameter (about the size of a pencil eraser) should be checked by a doctor.
 - Evolving: Moles that change over time, such as getting larger, changing color, itching, bleeding, or crusting, should be checked by a doctor.
 - Feeling: Moles that have developed a new feeling, such as itching or pain, should be checked by a doctor.
- Dermatologists can conduct annual skin exams using a specialized, hand-held tool called a dermatoscope which uses light and magnification to see details of the skin that would not be otherwise visible.
- After a skin check with a dermatoscope, dermatologists may take a small scraping or remove an area of skin for examination in a lab to determine if it is cancerous, pre-cancerous, or the result of some other skin condition.