

Adventist Healthcare: Health Tip of the Week

Summer Skin Care

More than one million new cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed in the U.S. this year. Poison Ivy, Poison Oak and Poison Sumac cause allergic reactions in half of the population each year.

Skin Cancer is the world's most common malignancy. There are three main forms of skin cancer: Basal cell Carcinoma, Squamous cell Carcinoma and Melanoma. Melanoma is the most serious type that can spread to other organs. One person dies of Melanoma every hour.

Symptoms of Skin Cancer

- The ABCD's of early warning signs include: asymmetry, uneven borders, varied colors and diameters larger than a pencil eraser.
- Look for changes in a mole or a sore that doesn't heal. Also, look for a skin growth that increases in size and a spot that continues to itch, hurt or scab.

Prevention of Skin Cancer

- Studies have shown that sunscreen can prevent skin cancer. Apply it at least 30 minutes in advance, reapply frequently and use a high SPF.
- Avoid the sun from 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM.
- Wear hats, sunglasses and loose-fitting/light-colored clothing for added protection.

Poison Ivy, Poison Oak and Poison Sumac are the most common plants that cause a skin rash. They are native perennials that grow in woods, fields and gardens, in sun or shade and in wet or dry places. Poison Ivy/Oak has three leaflets per stem. Poison Sumac has a row of 6-10 leaflets. A sap called urushiol oil causes the allergic reaction from these plants.

Symptoms of Poison Ivy/Oak/Sumac

- The skin rash usually comes within 24-48 hours after contact.
- The rash is characterized by itching, redness, burning, swelling and blisters.

Prevention of Poison Ivy/Oak/Sumac

- You can get a skin rash by directly touching the plants and by touching clothing, shoes and pets that have sap on them. Coming in contact with the smoke of these burning plants also causes a rash.
- Stay away from fires and anything else that causes the oil to become airborne such as a lawnmower or trimmer.
- Within six hours of contact, it is important to remove all clothing and shoes and wash your skin with soap and water. Apply rubbing alcohol

to the parts of skin that are affected.

Sources: The American Institute of Preventative Medicine, American Cancer Society, American Academy of Dermatology, The Skin Cancer Foundation and Washington and Shady Grove Adventist Hospitals. The Health Tip of the Week is for educational purposes only. For additional information, consult your physician. Please feel free to copy and distribute this health resource.