

Living Well with AIMGA

VOL. 5 - MELANOMA & SKIN CANCER AWARENESS



OVERVIEW

The amount of people diagnosed with skin cancer has been increasing in Canada steadily over the past 30 years. About one third of all new cases of cancer in Canada are skin cancers (Health Canada, 2018). May is recognized as Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month, and with summer around the corner, AIMGA's Health and Wellness Team decided to focus this volume on spreading relevant and evidence-based information and resources to help with skin protection and skin cancer prevention. Enjoy the content and continue to "live well with AIMGA"!



HEALTH REMINDERS!

- **May 8th is "Check Your Skin" Day.** This simple act can save you from potential life-threatening skin cancer. Examining your skin regularly can lead to early detection, treatment, and in most cases, positive outcomes. Self-examinations using the [ABCDEs](#) of early detection are recommended on a monthly basis. Remember to check your whole body, including places that are not always exposed to the sun, like armpits and soles of the feet. Ask someone to help check hard-to-see areas like the back and scalp.
 - **Damage to the skin caused by prolonged exposure to sunlight and sunburn is known as photoaging.** Exposure to UV light causes fine and coarse wrinkles, irregular pigmentation, large freckle-like spots, a yellowish complexion, and a leathery, rough skin texture. The danger of exposure to long or short-term sunlight goes far beyond any short-term pain, redness and discomfort that a sunburn can cause; after a sunburn fades, lasting damage remains.
 - **Practice sun safety** with the following: stay out of the sun between 10 am-4 pm or whenever the UV Index is 3 or higher; cover up arms and legs with loose-fitted, tightly woven and lightweight clothing; wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect the head, face, neck and ears; stay in the shade, like a park with big trees, partial roofs, awnings, umbrellas, etc.; wear sunglasses, especially wraparound styles are great to protect the sides of the eyes; and avoid indoor tanning. There is a strong link between indoor tanning and skin cancer; in 2009, tanning beds became classified as "carcinogenic to humans" – the strongest classification for cancer-causing substances.
 - **When exposed to the sun:** use sunscreen labeled "broad spectrum" and "water resistant" with an SPF of at least 30; put sunscreen on when the UV index is 3 or higher, even when cloudy; apply generously at least 15 minutes before going into the sun; reapply every 2-3 hours or after swimming or sweating; wear sunscreen under the edges of your clothing, the back of your neck, your ears and other often missed places.
 - **Be aware of these health reminders all year, not just in the summertime.** The sun's rays can reflect off of snow, sand, water and even concrete!
- Sources:** [Canadian Skin Cancer Foundation, 2018](#); [Canadian Skin Cancer Foundation, 2023](#); [Canadian Dermatology Association, nd](#); [Skin Cancer Foundation, 2022](#)



RED FLAGS

- 1 Some people who are at higher risk of developing melanoma are listed below:** History of indoor tanning; fair skin; personal/familial history of any skin cancer or melanoma; sun exposure and/or sunburns; those with blue or green eyes; those with blonde or red hair; atypical moles or new moles.
- 2 The ABCDEs of Melanoma is a guide to finding moles that may be cancer. If you notice any of the following symptoms, see your doctor or a dermatologist:** ASSYMETRIC: A mole that has an irregular or asymmetric shape; BORDER: A mole that has uneven, ragged, irregular or blurry borders; BLEEDS: A mole that is itchy, painful

or bleeds; COLOR: The color of the mole is not uniform and may have different shades of brown, black or even pink, red or white; DIAMETER: A mole that is larger than 6 mm (pencil eraser); EVOLVING: An existing mole that changes in size, shape or color over time; ELEVATED: The mole is raised above the skin and may have a rough or scaly texture.

[Click here for more information about Melanoma!](#)

Sources: [Cancer Support Community, 2023;](#) [Melanoma Canada;](#)



TIPS & RESOURCES

- [Melanoma Canada](#)
- [Canadian Cancer Society](#)
- [Canadian Dermatology Association](#)
- [Health Canada](#)
- [Cancer Care Ontario](#)
- [Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care](#)
- [Canadian Cancer Survivor Network](#)
- [Canadian Skin Cancer Foundation](#)
- [Save Your Skin Foundation](#)
- [Alberta Society of Melanoma](#)
- [AIM At Melanoma Association - Podcast](#)
- [Alberta Cancer Foundation](#)

For other resources and organizations, use this [Community Services Locator](#) by typing in your location (anywhere in Canada) to get the nearest support group for melanoma or any other condition.

DID YOU KNOW?



AIMGA experts are available to speak to your organization on this topic.

Book your presentation today by emailing drew@aimga.ca

For more information, check out the full version of the “Living Well With AIMGA” Newsletter by scanning the QR code below with your phone!



<https://aimga.ca/wp-content/uploads/MAY2023-LivingWithAIMGA-Newsletter.pdf>