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## **Outdoor enthusiasts reminded that Skin Cancer can be prevented**

Memorial Day weekend is often the beginning of early summer outdoor recreational activities like swimming, camping and family outings. The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources is reminding the public that May is National Skin Cancer Awareness Month, a time to increase awareness about the importance of the prevention, early detection and treatment of skin cancer.

One of the best ways to prevent cancer is to avoid sunburns. State Health Officer and Commissioner for Public Health Dr. Marian Swinker said, "Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Approximately 2 million persons in the U.S. are diagnosed with nonmelanoma skin cancers each year. While nonmelanoma cancer is not as deadly as melanoma, it can cause damage and disfigurement if left untreated. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation and a history of sunburn are preventable risk factors for skin cancer. We all can take a few simple precautions that are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that will help us greatly reduce the risk of developing skin cancer."

The CDC suggests protecting yourself from UV radiation by seeking shade, especially during midday hours; wearing a hat with a wide brim to shade the face, head, ears, and neck; wearing clothing to protect exposed skin; using sunscreen that has a sun protection factor of 15 or higher and has both UVA and UVB protection; and avoiding indoor tanning.

Dr. Swinker says "When we take these preventive steps, we can not only protect ourselves, but also protect our children and other loved ones."

Skin cancers often start as changes to your skin. Persons concerned over prolonged sun exposure, excessive tanning bed use, scaly patches or lesions, moles or freckles should consult a physician for a skin cancer screening. Skin cancer can be cured if it is found and treated early. To learn more about cancer visit [www.cancerregistry.wv.gov](http://www.cancerregistry.wv.gov) or go to [www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin).