



## **Your Child and Skin Cancer**

**Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States. Statistics remind us that 1 in 5 of us will develop skin cancer sometime in our lifetime and, 1 in 60 develop melanoma, the most serious skin cancer. No one is immune from skin cancer. Having skin makes us all susceptible.**

**We know skin cancer is more rare in children, and most children do not need regular skin exams by a dermatologist unless they have specific risk factors. As parents and caretakers, we need to be vigilant about their risk factors. If a child is immunosuppressed from certain diseases, medications or treatments, they are more likely to develop skin cancer. Unexplained lesions, a non-healing sore, family history and multiple sunburns also contribute to your child's risk. Often children, especially in adolescence develop moles. A change is a red flag. Concerning moles or spots usually follow the ABCDE formula developed by dermatologists from NYU Langone Medical Center:**

- A**      **asymmetry, one side is different from the other**
- B**      **border, uneven or jagged**
- C**      **color, black, blue rather than brown**
- D**      **diameter, a typical mole should be less in size than a pencil eraser**
- E**      **evolving, the most important - change in color, size, height**

**Any of these characteristics would warrant a dermatological visit.**

**Fortunately, most skin cancers are preventable. Remember to use sunscreen with a SPF of 30 with UVA/UVB protection, even on cloudy days. It needs to be re-applied despite the season because water, sand and yes, snow reflect even stronger rays. Wear hats, sunglasses and SPF clothing. Rash guards and SPF bathing suits and sports gear are now readily available to help us all be sun-safe. Try to seek shade especially between 10am-2pm. And NEVER go to a tanning bed salon. Using tanning beds before 20; can increase your chances of developing melanoma by 47%, squamous cell by 58% and basal cell by 24% (American Academy of Dermatology).**

**And don't forget to be a role model in sun-safe practices, the life you save may be your child's!**