



Press Release
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Media Contact
Elisha Rosier | elisha.rosier@cchdonline.com
806-647-8700

Casto County Healthcare Highlights the Importance of Skin Health this Summer

DIMMITT, Texas (May 27, 2024) – As summer approaches and Texans spend more time outdoors, officials at Castro County Healthcare (CCH) are urging residents to prioritize sun safety. Skin cancer, the most prevalent type of cancer in Texas, sees thousands of new cases diagnosed annually, with the state's sunny climate leading to higher UV exposure and increased risk.

“With warmer weather and much higher levels of UV radiation expected this summer, the climate in Texas is prime for increasing the risk of skin cancer among residents in the region,” says Sheila Higgins, FNP at Medical Center of Dimmitt, a local medical clinic and part of CCH. “Texas sees a substantial number of melanoma cases, the most dangerous form of skin cancer, so we must do what we can to keep ourselves healthy and safe.”

Skin cancer is when skin cells grow abnormally and uncontrollably because their DNA is damaged. This damage usually happens because of ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or artificial sources like tanning beds. There are three primary types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma (BCC), squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), and melanoma.

BCC is the most common and usually develops in sun-exposed areas such as the face, neck, and hands. It grows slowly and rarely metastasizes, but if left untreated, it can cause significant local damage.

SCC also commonly appears on sun-exposed skin and has a higher propensity than BCC to invade deeper skin layers and spread to other parts of the body. It often presents as a red, scaly patch, an open sore, or a wart-like growth.

Melanoma, the most dangerous form of skin cancer, can develop anywhere on the body, including areas not typically exposed to the sun.

Originating from melanocytes, the pigment-producing cells, melanoma spreads more rapidly than BCC or SCC and can be life-threatening if not detected and treated early. It often manifests as a new or changing mole or an unusual growth on the skin.

Risk factors for skin cancer include prolonged UV exposure, fair skin, a history of sunburn, excessive tanning, a weakened immune system, and a family history of the disease. Skin cancer can affect both men and women at any age.

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Preventative measures such as using sunscreen, wearing protective clothing, avoiding tanning beds, and regularly checking the skin for changes are essential. Early detection and treatment are crucial for successful management, making it necessary to consult a healthcare professional if any suspicious changes in the skin are noticed.

Skin cancer screening includes monthly self-exams to check for new or changing moles and annual clinical exams by a dermatologist. Suspicious lesions are biopsied to confirm if they are cancerous. Early detection through these methods is vital for effective treatment.

For more information about skin cancer screenings, talk to your local medical provider or schedule an appointment at the Medical Center of Dimmitt by calling 806-647-2194. To learn more about local medical programs and services available in Castro County, please visit www.plainsmemorial.com.

About Castro County Healthcare

Founded in 1963, Castro County Healthcare provides healthcare for Castro County, Texas residents and the surrounding region. Anchored by Plains Memorial Hospital, the healthcare system offers many medical services, including 24-hour emergency care, advanced radiology services, including CT scanning and MRIs, outpatient lab, physical and occupational therapy, swing bed services, patient education, and more. For additional information, please visit www.plainsmemorial.com.

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