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Not-So Skin-Deep

Summer is here and as it progresses, it's important to remember that spending too much time in the sunlight increases the risk of developing skin cancer.

Skin cancer, the abnormal growth of skin cells, is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the United States with over one million people diagnosed each year. Unfortunately, the three forms of skin cancer, basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and particularly melanoma – the deadliest form – are on the rise.

- Basal cell carcinoma – The most common form of skin cancer and easiest to treat. It grows slowly, usually in the form of a raised area and it may crust and bleed.
- Squamous cell carcinoma – Usually found on the face, hands, or ears. May be red or pink scaly bumps. Without treatment it can form masses and can metastasize.
- Malignant melanoma – A very serious cancer affecting deeper layers of skin and very likely to invade other tissue. It can grow from a mole or a flat, light brown or black spot with irregular borders. Later it can turn red, blue or white.

Precancerous skin conditions are also on the rise in younger people, and can be the first step in the development of skin cancer. A precancerous growth on the skin that is important to watch for is actinic keratosis. It

usually looks like a scaly or crusty bump on the skin. It can be light or dark, tan, pink, red, a combination of these, or the same color as the skin. It is usually dry and rough to the touch and sometimes it can itch or feel tender. If left untreated, some can evolve into squamous cell carcinoma.

Perform a monthly skin exam and contact a dermatologist if you notice an unusual blemish, lump, or sore area, or if a mole changes in any way (color, shape, or size). A skin exam is easy, just remember your ABCD's:

- **A**symmetry. Check for growths that are not oval, or do not have a uniform appearance.
- **B**order. Irregular edges.
- **C**olor. See your doctor immediately if you have a growth made up of different colors.
- **D**iameter. See a doctor if a growth is larger than 6 millimeters, or the size of a pencil eraser.

Skin cancer may be the most prevalent form of cancer in the United States, but it is also the most preventable. Limit your exposure to ultraviolet light. When outdoors, wear a sunscreen with a sun protection factor of 15 or higher.

Learn more about cancer at the American Cancer Society Web site at www.cancer.org or the National Cancer Institute Web site at www.nci.nih.gov.

Love Coffee a Latte

With coffee franchises on every corner, in malls, and airports, there's no question, Americans love their coffee. There is nothing like a delicious double chocolate latte first thing in the morning to clear our heads and get us ready for the day!

And if you miss that morning cup? Does it feel like you just can't shake that headache and sluggishness? Can't concentrate? Have a cup and the headache's gone; your zip and verve returned. It's true, drinking one or two cups of coffee can give you energy and make you feel more productive. You might be surprised, however, if you

found out that your headache and sluggishness was caffeine withdrawal.

The not-so-secret ingredient in coffee that gets us going is caffeine, a plant product that is found naturally in coffee beans, tea, and even cocoa. Caffeine is a central nervous system stimulant. It also has addictive properties. In fact, we can become dependent on as little as one cup of coffee per day. Missing your cup-'O-Java can result in withdrawal symptoms ranging from headaches, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, even flu-like symptoms, nausea, and muscle tenderness.

Still want that coffee? You're not alone. Caffeine is the world's most popular stimulant. It's cheap and it does the job. Physiologically, caffeine starts a

chemical chain reaction that pumps adrenaline and increases your alertness, making you feel generally pretty good. Sounds good? There's a downside.

Caffeine can also make some people feel restless and irritable. It elevates your heart rate and blood pressure. Caffeine also has a diuretic effect, which can dehydrate you. For some sensitive people, caffeine can disturb sleep even if they had their coffee during the morning hours. Caffeine has a half-life of about six hours. This means that it's still floating around in your system 8-10 hours after ingesting it.

Should you quit your cup-'O-Joe? If you're healthy – that is, you don't suffer from heart disease, hypertension, or other chronic conditions – it's probably safe in moderate amounts. According to the American Heart Association one or two cups per day does not seem to be harmful for most people. But you may want to avoid caffeine just before engaging in fitness activities (especially in hot weather) where caffeine's diuretic effects can multiply loss of fluid.

If you decide to quit or reduce caffeine or switch to decaffeinated beverages, take it slowly. Reduce your consumption by a small amount each day. This will minimize the uncomfortable withdrawal effects. Also, be aware that sometimes there are still small amounts of caffeine in decaffeinated products.

The amount of **caffeine in some common foods and beverages** is as follows:

- Coffee, brewed - 40 to 180 mg. per cup
- Coffee, instant - 30 to 120 mg. per cup
- Coffee, decaffeinated - 3 to 5 mg. per cup
- Tea, brewed American - 20 to 90 mg. per cup
- Tea, brewed imported - 25 to 110 mg. per cup
- Tea, instant - 28 mg. per cup
- Cocoa - 4 mg. per cup
- Chocolate, milk - 3 to 6 mg. per ounce
- Chocolate - bittersweet - 25 mg. per ounce
- Cola and other soft drinks, containing caffeine - 36 to 90 mg. per 12 ounces
- Cola and other soft drinks, decaffeinated - 0 mg. per 12 ounces

Pain in the Back

At some point, most people will suffer from some form of temporary back pain. Sometimes, simple activities like carrying groceries, driving for long periods, or bending to pick something up can cause wrenching back pain.

In most cases* back pain is due to poor postural habits or strain from improper bending or lifting. These injuries usually heal completely but may recur if bad habits continue. Your posture is important to overall back health.

You can protect and strengthen your back by making some simple changes. The suggestions below will help strengthen your back and stabilize your trunk. They will even help improve your "back" appeal.

Posture Perfect

Get in the habit of standing and sitting upright without slouching or rounding your shoulders. Use your abdominal muscles to hold your belly in to keep it from protruding and putting excess force on the spine. Select chairs that

have a straight back and low-back support. When sitting, keep your knees a bit higher than the hips. If you need to, use a low stool to raise your feet. When turning while seated, don't twist at the waist, move your whole body.

Stability exercises for back and bum

These are just some exercise to strengthen vital muscles that help to stabilize your lower body and back.

Step-ups

Stand behind a 6- to 12-inch-high step. With your left foot flat on the floor, place your right foot flat on the step. Pushing off as little as possible with the left foot, bring the left foot up to step level. Lower your left foot to the floor. Repeat to muscle fatigue (in the range of 12 to 20 reps). Reverse and repeat. This can be done while holding a pair of dumbbells.

Standing Kickbacks

Use a chair or bar for support. This is a small movement and is performed at the hip. Standing with your feet

together, rotate the right foot outward from the hip. In a slow, controlled motion, squeezing the bum, lift the leg behind you repeatedly without bending your knee. Continue until you feel fatigued (about 12 to 20 reps). Repeat with left leg.

Stationary Lunges

Start with one foot in front of the other two to three feet apart. Slowly lower yourself as if you were going to go down on one knee until the rear knee forms a 90-degree angle (make sure front knee does NOT project over your toe). Rise by squeezing the buttocks and pushing into the ground through your front heel. Perform 12 repetitions. Repeat on your other leg. Aim for three sets.

No Strain No Pain

Developing habits that protect your back will prevent injury over the long term. Below are some tips to keep your back healthy:

- Don't bend over to lift. Instead, bend your hips and knees and squat to pick up the object.

Remember to keep your back straight, hold the object close to your body, and never twist your body during the lift.

- If you must move a heavy object, push rather than pull when you can.
- Females: Wear flat shoes or shoes with low heels (1 inch or lower).
- Exercise. A sedentary lifestyle can result in back pain.
- When driving for long periods, move the seat forward and maintain a straight back.

Check with your FOH Wellness Fitness Professional for more tips to help you strengthen and protect your back.

**About 10% of back pain can be due to serious conditions such as degenerative disk disease or herniated disks in the spine. See your doctor to rule out these conditions. Always consult a physician before beginning any new exercise program.*

You cannot plough a field by turning it over in your mind.

- Unknown

Deskercise Corner: Stabilize and Strengthen

Ski Squat

Stand with your back against a wall and feet apart and about 16 inches from the wall. Lower yourself into a seated position, keeping feet flat on the floor, and hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Return to standing and relax for 30 seconds. Repeat three times. Do not bend your knees beyond a 90-degree angle.