

ARTICLE ALLY STRACZEK | PHOTOGRAPHY
PROVIDED BY DR. BAHL

MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

WHAT A DERMATOLOGIST CAN
TELL YOU ABOUT SKIN CANCER

SUMMER IS HERE! With the longer days and increased time in the sun, it is a great time for us to focus on sun protection and routine skin cancer screening.

There are three types of skin cancer, with melanoma's being the deadliest. More than 85% of skin cancer is related to sun exposure, so it is important to be diligent about our skin's health.

South Dayton Lifestyle reached out to Dr. Shalini Bahl, to learn more about skin cancer protection. Dr. Bahl is a board certified general and cosmetic dermatologist and founder of Ace Dermatology, Laser and Cosmetics in South Dayton. With almost 20 years of experience, Dr. Bahl is highly trained in the detection and treatment of all types of skin cancer. "The skin is the largest organ of the body and the window into a patient's internal health," she said. "Dermatologists can be the first to detect lupus or early onset diabetes, based on a skin finding in a routine skin cancer screening. As a dermatologist, I am not only able to diagnose and treat skin disease, but I am able to help a patient's self-esteem and confidence with intervention."

Dr. Bahl recommends these steps to protect your health.



SEEK CERTIFIED PROFESSIONALS

"Look for medical professionals with credentials," said Dr. Bahl. "The National Cancer Institute declares that skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States, with melanoma's being the deadliest, killing 6,000 people each year. It is important that you seek a board certified dermatologist to identify and treat even the smallest areas of concern."

A board certified dermatologist has a minimum of eight years of medical education and training; 12,000-16,000 hours of patient care; and board certification through the American Board of Dermatology, the American Osteopathic Board of Dermatology, or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

KNOW THAT EARLY DETECTION MATTERS

"Early detection saves lives in my patients," stated Dr. Bahl. "Treating precancerous lesions before they become skin cancer and educating a patient on sun protection are important. I recommend hats and protective clothing, in addition to sunscreen."

The Skin Care Foundation states that if caught early, melanoma has a five-year survival rate of 99%. The survival rate drops to 66% if the disease reaches the lymph nodes and 27% if it spreads to distant organs.

GET ANNUAL SCREENINGS

Although there are no clear-cut guidelines for starting routine full body exams and cancer screenings, dermatologists recommend annual full body exams to patients if there is a family history of skin cancer, sun exposure, and tanning, or if a mole or lesion appears on your skin that is new, changing, or unusual.

"It's particularly important for men, as they are less likely to be diligent about the use of sunscreen and inspecting their skin. Men above the age of 55 represent most melanoma cases. Men under the age of 49 have a higher probability of developing melanoma than any other cancer," Dr. Bahl explained.

Dr. Bahl shared the story of a man in his 40s who came to her office for a full body exam. "He definitely had some signs of sun damage on his skin, and I was concerned about a small lesion on his back that could have been missed by an untrained professional. I used a special instrument called a DermLite with a magnifying glass and polarized light to examine the lesion, to confirm that this was an abnormal growth.

"Unfortunately the biopsy came back as invasive melanoma, and the patient was quickly scheduled for a procedure to remove the cancer," she said.

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“We were able to save this patient’s life by detecting this nonspecific lesion on his full body exam and treating the melanoma before it spread to his lymph nodes or metastasized to other parts of his body. He was a model patient and followed all care instructions post procedure, and his scar will heal beautifully.

“Saving lives is what makes my job so gratifying and is why I love coming to work every day,” summarized Dr. Bahl. “I am thrilled that we were able to catch this early, to give him and his family a beautiful result.”

START TODAY

Start taking care of your skin today, so you can enjoy many more summers with your loved ones.

“I am encouraged that my office is seeing more patients in their 20s and 30s who are prioritizing their skin health,” said Dr. Bahl. “There is no substitute for continual monitoring and screenings.”

Schedule your appointment for a full body screening. Ace Dermatology, Laser and Cosmetics is accepting patients in the office under COVID-19 guidelines; but for those who are not comfortable visiting the office yet, Dr. Bahl is performing visits via telemedicine.