

Skin cancer Awareness

Signs and Symptoms

Often, the first sign of melanoma is a change in the size, shape, color, or feel of an existing mole. Most melanomas have a black or blue-black area. Melanoma also may appear as a new mole. It may be black, abnormal, or "ugly looking."

Thinking of "ABCD" can help you remember what to watch for:

Asymmetry—the shape of one half does not match the other.

Border—The edges are often ragged, notched, blurred, or irregular in outline; the pigment may spread into the surrounding skin.

Color—the color is uneven. Shades of black, brown, and tan may be present. Areas of white, grey, red, pink, or blue also may be seen.

Diameter—there is a change in size, usually an increase. Melanomas are usually larger than the eraser of a pencil (1/4 inch or 5 millimeters).

Melanomas can vary greatly in how they look. Many show all of the ABCD features. However, some may show changes or abnormalities in only one or two of the ABCD features.

Melanomas in an early *stage* may be found when an existing mole changes slightly, for example, when a new black area forms. Newly formed fine scales and itching in a mole also are common symptoms of early melanoma. In more advanced melanoma, the texture of the mole may change. For example, it may become hard or lumpy. Melanomas may feel different from regular moles. More advanced tumors may itch, ooze, or bleed. But melanomas usually do not cause pain.

A skin examination is often part of a routine checkup by a health care provider. People also can check their own skin for new growths or other changes. Changes in the skin, such as a change in a mole, should be reported to the health care provider right away. The person may be referred to a *dermatologist*, a doctor who specializes in diseases of the skin.

Melanoma can be cured if it is diagnosed and treated when the tumor is thin and has not deeply invaded the skin. However, if a melanoma is not removed at its early stages, cancer cells may grow downward from the skin surface and invade healthy tissue. When a melanoma becomes thick and deep, the disease often spreads to other parts of the body and is difficult to control.

Native American Cancer Support Group

The Native American Circle of Hope will be hosting their monthly meeting on May 15, 2008 at 7:00 in the W.W. Hastings Indian Hospital cafeteria. Rick Gassaway from Community Services will be the featured presenter for the month.

For more information please call Lura Whiteshirt at 458-3170, extension 5129

Free Cancer Education Workshops

CancerCare is a national nonprofit organization that provides free, professional support services for anyone affected by cancer; people with cancer, caregivers, children, loved one, and the bereaved. CancerCare programs – including counseling, education, financial assistance, and practical help – are provided by trained oncology social workers and are completely free of charge. Listed below are the topics and dates for the May teleconference calls. All calls are free of charge. For more information on these programs please call 1-800-813-4673, or email info@cancer.org Scheduled times for Workshops are 12:30-1:30 PM Central, 1:30-2:30 PM Eastern Time.

May Calendar

- **May 1, 2008:** Breast Cancer: Update on Clinical Trials for Aromatase Inhibitors
- **May 13, 2008:** The Sixth Annual Cancer Survivorship Series: Living With, Through and Beyond Cancer, Part II: Rediscovering Intimacy in Your Relationships following Treatment
- **May 16, 2008:** Medical Update on Metastatic Prostate Cancer
- **May 21, 2008:** Tools for Improving the Chemotherapy Experience

National Women's Health Week: May 11-17, 2008

The 9th Annual National Women's Health Week will begin Mother's Day, May 11, 2008 thru May 17, 2008. National Women's Check-Up Day will be Monday, May 12, 2008. National Women's Health Week empowers women across the country to get healthy by taking action. The nationwide initiative, coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health (OWH), encourages women to make their health a top priority and take simple steps for a longer, healthier and happier life. During the week, families, communities, businesses, government, health organizations and other groups work together to educate women on steps to improve physical and mental health in order to prevent disease. Steps to take include:

- Engaging in physical activity most days of the week
- Making healthy food choices
- Visiting a healthcare provider to receive regular check-ups and preventive screenings
- Avoiding risky behaviors like smoking and not wearing a seatbelt

Cherokee Nation tribal members are invited to attend the Women's Health Fairs at the following Clinics:

- W.W. Hastings Indian Hospital – Friday May 9th, 9:00-2:00 in the waiting area of the Women's Clinic
- Muskogee Three Rivers Health Clinic – Tuesday, May 13, 9:00-2:00 in the clinic atrium
- Nowata Will Rogers Health Clinic – Friday, May 16th, 9:00-3:00 in the main waiting area

For more information please call Barbara J Neal, health educator, Cherokee Nation Cancer Programs 918-453-5138.

Cancer Resource Center

Many disparities have been identified for the cancer patients in the Cherokee Nation. Programs are currently being developed to meet the needs of these patients and their families. One program is the Cancer Resource Center located in the Cherokee First Department at the Cherokee Nation Complex.

It is anticipated the resource center will begin operation on May 1, 2008. Cancer patients, family members, and those who care for cancer patients will be able to access the internet or check out materials in order to learn as much as they can about their cancer. Research has show that empowering the patient, their care givers, and their family has increased survival rates for these patients.

For more information lease contact Donna Bush at 918-453-5755

Lets Play Trivia! Please answer the question below by sending us your response.

What should you watch for with in skin cancer?

Please e-mail your response along with your name and address to www.cancer.cherokee.org or log on to our web site at: <http://cancer.cherokee.org>. You can also contact Chris at 918-453-5453.

Rules: Each month one winner will be drawn from those who send in the correct answer. A prize will be sent to the winner. Winners names will go into the Grand Prize drawing being held June 08 for a chance to win the grand prize, - so don't forget to play.

Cancer Programs Staff

Kymerly Cravatt, Director
Angela Leach, BCCEDP
Manager
Ruth Hummingbird,
CCC Coordinator
Ann Wheeler, Cancer Registrar
Vicki McAlpine, Case Manager
Loretta Denny, Case Manager
Barbara Neal, Health Educator
Youlanda Cain, Case Manager

Terry Thomas, Case Manager
Neoma Flynn, Case Manager
Chris Stilwell, Special Assistant
Tammy Runabout, Budget Analyst II
Donna Bush, Administrative Assistant
Danette Walker, Data Specialist
Linda Case, Cancer Case Manager
Greg Bilby, Health Educator

For More information about our programs please call: The Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program at 918-453-5755, Cancer Registry at 918-453-5443, or the Comprehensive Cancer Control Program at 918-453-5453. You can also log in on our website at <http://cancer.cherokee.org> or e-mail us at www.cancer.cherokee.org

The Cherokee Nation Cancer Programs Comprehensive Cancer Control Project is supported by cooperative agreement #U55/CCU621919-04 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.