

April brings more than showers to the Treasure Valley; it brings outdoor activities as varied as the people who live here. Unfortunately Idaho also has other statistics. Idaho is the number one state for deaths due to melanoma. It is also number seven on the list of states with the highest skin cancer rates. People have a 1 in 5 chance of developing one type of skin cancer over their life time. More people are diagnosed with skin cancer than with breast, prostate, lung, or colon cancer combined. One million people are diagnosed with basal or squamous cell cancer and 68 thousand are diagnosed yearly with melanoma. One person dies every hour from skin cancer, usually malignant melanoma. The cause of skin cancer is preventable. Ultraviolet radiation, whether it is man-made or natural is carcinogenic. In the USA, there are more tanning salons than Starbucks. Knowledge and using this knowledge can prevent this tragedy.

SLIP_SLOP_SLAP_WRAP are words to live by. Slip on protective clothes before you go outside. Slop on sunscreen with a SPF of 30 and reapply often especially if you are in the water or sweating. Slap on a hat with a brim that covers you ears, nose, and back of your neck. Wrap on sunglasses to protect your eyes. You should frequently examine your skin for unusual discoloration, sores, and moles. Have someone examine those areas you can't see like your back and scalp. More than one color in a mole, moles larger than a pencil eraser and sores that don't heal need to be brought to your doctor's attention.

Now go and enjoy our Idaho. Just be aware of ultraviolet radiation and the effects it has on your skin.

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