



North Central District Health Department

- Enfield—31 North Main Street, Enfield, CT 06082 * (860) 745-0383 Fax (860) 745-3188
- Vernon—375 Hartford Turnpike, Room 120, Vernon, CT 06066 * (860) 872-1501 Fax (860) 872 1531
- Windham—Town Hall, 979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226 * (860) 465-3033 Fax (860) 465-3034
- Stafford—Town Hall, 1 Main Street, Stafford Springs, CT 06076 * (860) 684-5609 Fax (860) 684-1768

Patrice A. Sulik, MPH, R.S.
Director of Health

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CONTACT: PATRICE SULIK, 860-745-0383

Sun Protective Practices Saves Lives

NCDHD Encourages Residents to Use Sun Protective Practices When Outside

Do you enjoy being outdoors? Do you use sunscreen and apply sun protective practices every time you are outdoors? Do you know it takes only 12 minutes in the sun for unprotected skin to burn?

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 80% of skin cancers can be prevented by protection of skin from the sun's rays. That is why the North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) encourages residents to practice sun protective practices to prevent sunburns and skin cancer.

There are three major types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and malignant melanoma. Basal cell and squamous cell carcinoma, commonly known as nonmelanoma skin cancer, are highly curable but can cause skin damage and disfigurement if they are left untreated. When detected and treated early, more than 95% of these carcinomas can be cured.

Malignant melanoma is more serious and can result in death if untreated. Melanoma may suddenly appear without warning and can spread rapidly to other organs. An estimated 46,870 new cases of invasive melanoma in men and 29,510 in women will be diagnosed in the U.S. in 2016, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation.

“It’s simple to protect yourself from the sun’s rays,” said Patrice Sulik, NCDHD Director of Health.

“Slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen, and slap on a hat! Most skin cancers can be prevented when sun protection measures are used consistently.”

NCDHD Board member, Linda DeGray of Enfield, states “Everyone is at risk of developing skin cancer. Building safe sun habits into your daily routine is easier than you think.”

Exposure to the sun’s ultraviolet rays appears to be the most important environmental factor in developing skin cancer. Apply sun protective practices consistently. Simple and effective protection practices are:

- Dress appropriately, wear long sleeve shirt, pants, hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.
- Avoid being in the sun between the hours of 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., when the sun’s ultraviolet rays are the strongest.
- Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or greater on all exposed skin, and apply at least 20 minutes before going outside.
- Use sunscreen that protects for UVA and UVB.
- Reapply sunscreen after swimming, perspiring heavily, or drying skin with a towel.

Sulik said, “Individuals should check themselves regularly for new growths or other changes in the skin. Any changes should be reported immediately to your primary care provider.”

For more information on Skin cancer and sun safety, visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov.

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About NCDHD

The North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) serves the communities of Enfield, East Windsor, Ellington, Stafford, Suffield, Vernon, Windham, and Windsor Locks. NCDHD is a full-time public health department with a full-time staff funded by its member towns and an annual per capita grant from the Connecticut State Department of Public Health. NCDHD provides professional public health services in the areas of health education and disease prevention, environmental health and emergency preparedness. The mission of NCDHD is to prevent disease, injury, and disability by promoting and protecting the health and well-being of the public and our environment.

For more information about NCDHD visit www.ncdhd.org.