

Skin Cancer

Most skin cancers can be successfully treated if caught early. Look for areas of skin (lesions) that fail to heal completely within approximately 30 days. The most deadly form of skin cancer is **malignant melanoma**. Remembering the signs of malignant melanoma is as easy as “A-B-C-D and E.”

A—stands for “asymmetry” The sides of the lesion don’t match.

B---stands for “borders” The borders are irregular, jagged.

C---stands for “color” The colors include pink, brown, red, and black. The colors are mottled in appearance, not uniform.

D---stands for “diameter” Anything larger than 6 millimeters (about the size of a pencil eraser) is suspicious.

E—stands for elevation. A skin lesion that is elevated, in combination with any other skin cancer sign, is suspicious.

Check yourself regularly for any of the signs mentioned above. Use a mirror to check your back, or have someone else check it for you. You decide!

If you notice any signs of skin cancer, make an appointment to see your family doctor or dermatologist right away. Early detection and treatment of skin cancers provides a 95% success rate. The success rate falls dramatically once the cancer begins to spread.

With the pressures of haying, harvesting, and working with livestock, many ranchers and farmers don’t place much, if any, priority on preventing skin cancer. But please consider these facts:

- 1) Skin cancer is preventable
- 2) Skin cancer can be fatal.
- 3) You are at risk.

Additional Resources:

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/ped_7_1_What_You_Need_To_Know_About_Skin_Cancer.asp?sitearea=&level=

<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/skin-cancer/DS00190>

<http://www.skincancer.org/>

<http://www.skin-cancers.info/graph-of-skin-cancer.jpg>

(Article provided by Marie Reed. Marie is a registered nurse with the Texas Department of State Health Services, with a longtime passion for agricultural safety and health. If you have questions about the topic above contact marie.reed@dshs.state.tx.us).