



The UConn Buzz



SKIN CANCER DETECTION AND PREVENTION MONTH

The most commonly diagnosed cancer in the United States is [skin cancer](#). It is estimated that one out of five Americans will develop skin cancer at some point in their life. There are three major types of skin cancer—basal cell carcinomas, squamous cell carcinomas, and melanomas. [Basal and squamous cell skin cancers](#) (also referred to as nonmelanoma skin cancer, or NMSC) make up the vast majority of cases. The most recent [report](#) on the incidence of NMSC estimated that there were 5.4 million cases diagnosed among 3.3 million people in 2012. These cancers are usually not malignant, meaning that they do not typically spread to other parts of the body. However, it is still important to detect these cancers early because if not treated, they can grow and invade other organs causing scarring and deformities. Basal and squamous cell carcinomas often show up on areas of the body that get a lot of sun exposure such as the neck and head. They are very treatable, especially if they are found in the early stages. [Melanomas](#) are cancers of melanocytes, which are the cells responsible for producing the pigment that gives our skin color. While this type of skin cancer is much less common, it is usually more fatal because it is more likely to metastasize and spread to other parts of the body. [Invasive melanoma](#) only accounts for about 1% of all skin cancer cases, but it is responsible for the majority of skin cancer deaths. The most common places for melanomas to show up are the chest and back for men and the legs for women.

One of the most important risk factors for

skin cancer is too much exposure to [ultra-violet radiation](#). UV rays cause damage to the DNA of skin cells, which leads to uncontrolled growth of skin cells and ultimately, cancer. Our main source of exposure to UV rays is the sun, but it is also recommended to stay away from tanning lamps and beds because they also expose us to harmful UV rays. It is important to note that while light-skinned people are more likely to have sun damaged skin, people of all skin colors and tones can be affected by UV radiation.

There are many ways to protect your skin from being damaged by the sun. The phrase [“Slip! Slop! Slap! and Wrap!”](#) is a helpful way to remember what to do when you are going to be out in the sunshine! **“Slip”** stands for slip on a shirt. Darker colored clothing typically provides more protection than lighter colored clothing. Also, more tightly woven fabrics provide more protection—if you can see light through your clothing, this means UV rays can get through as well. **“Slop”** stands for slop on some sunscreen. It is recommended to use a sunscreen with broad spectrum protection (meaning it protects against UVA and UVB rays) and a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or greater. Sunscreen should be reapplied at least every 2 hours. Sunscreens that claim to be water resistant only protect the skin for 40 or 80 minutes of swimming or sweating, so it's important to reapply more often in these situations. **“Slap”** stands for slap on a hat. A darker colored hat with at least a 2 to 3 inch brim all the way around will provide the best protection. **“Wrap”** stands for wrap on a pair of sunglasses. Make sure you check the label before you buy them to make

sure they actually protect against UV rays. Ideally, your sunglasses should block 99-100% of UVA and UVB rays. It's also important to seek shade to avoid being in direct sunlight for too long, especially between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm when the sun is the strongest. Take extra precautions when boating or at the beach because the water reflects sunlight and can increase your UV exposure.

It's important to know your own skin and be aware of your normal pattern of moles, freckles and blemishes so you will be able to tell if any changes occur. It is recommended that you do a [skin self-exam](#) once a month. Regular skin exams are especially important for people at a higher risk, for instance if you've had skin cancer before or you have a family history of skin cancer. A helpful tool for recognizing the early signs of melanoma is the ABCDE rule. Be on the lookout for any moles or blemishes that are **Asymmetrical**, have an irregular, ragged or blurred **Border**, are not the same **Color** all over, have a **Diameter** larger than 6 mm (about the size of a pencil eraser), or are **Evolving** (changing) in size, shape or color. In general, if you notice any changes to the skin, new growths or spots, or any spot that looks different from the rest of spots on your skin, you should have it examined by your doctor. Click [HERE](#) for more information on what to look for in a skin self-exam.

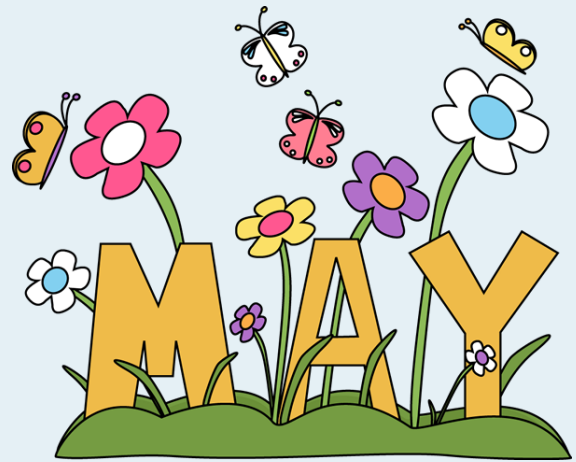
HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

Book Sale- The Friends of Mansfield Library will hold a book sale in the Buchanan Auditorium on Saturday May 4th from 9:00 am- 4:00 pm and Sunday May 5th from 9:00 am- 3:00 pm.

Sustainable Land Care Workshop Series- The Town of Mansfield is offering a series of free workshops focused on practical solutions to improve habitat, reduce storm water impacts to our rivers and streams, and manage food waste. “Backyard Composting” will be held this Saturday May 4th 10- 11 am and “Learn to Build a Rain Garden” will take place Sat. May 18th 9 am-noon. Click the link for details and to register for an event.

Vernon Mother’s Day Dash 5K will take place Sunday May 12th at 9:30 am at Henry Park in Vernon, CT. You can register individually, or as a Mother- Son/ Mother-Daughter Team. For more information and to register, visit their [website](#).

Summer Stroll- Join the Mansfield Downtown Partnership in kicking off the summer with a fun evening in Downtown Storrs! Check out the sales and specials, summer treats, and open houses at participating businesses. Enjoy tunes by local musicians as you stroll. The event will take place Thursday May 30th 5:00 pm- 8:00 pm.



Pesto Chicken Pasta with Asparagus 6 Servings

INGREDIENTS: 6 ounces bow tie pasta, 2 cups fresh asparagus, 3 cups cubed, cooked chicken, 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes, 1/3 cup chopped red onion, 1 can sliced ripe olives (well drained), 3/4 cup prepared pesto sauce, 3 tablespoons freshly shredded Romano cheese

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook pasta according to package directions; rinse and drain.
2. Steam asparagus until tender crisp. Drain.
3. Combine cooked pasta and asparagus in a large bowl. Stir in chicken, tomatoes, onions, olives and pesto sauce. Garnish with Romano cheese and serve.

PRIVATE WELL WATER TESTING

Private wells provide water to 820,000 people in Connecticut, approximately 23% of the population’s water supply comes from private wells according to the [Connecticut Department of Public Health](#). These wells are not regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency, although Local Health Departments do have the authority over the proper siting and construction of private wells. It is the responsibility of the well owners to test the quality of the water—it is recommended that you perform a Basic Indicators Test once a year. Additionally, if you notice a difference in taste, color, odor, or clarity contact your Local Health Department for assistance.

Well water testing can be done for bacteriological elements, trace metals and minerals, pesticides and herbicides, and organic and inorganic

chemicals. Click [here](#) to read about what elements you should test for and how frequently. After your water is tested you should document the date of the test and the results. The EPA has established standards for [maximum contaminant levels](#) (MCLs) and the CT DPH has set [action levels](#) for certain contaminants. Should your results come back high you should retest the water to verify the results, stop drinking the water until the issue is resolved, and contact your Local Health Department for advice moving forward.

You can get your well water tested at state certified [testing facilities](#). Procedures vary depending on the facility that is being used. Some facilities will send a technician to the location to take a sample and bring it back to the

lab for testing. Other facilities allow for the homeowner to collect a sample. It is important to follow their instructions to ensure the proper collection practices and prevent contamination. Proper maintenance and operation of your well water system is important for protecting the water quality. Check out this [best management practice checklist](#) for private well owners.

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from the CT Department of Public Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

