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## **Wise Notes for Consumers**

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### **Skin Cancer**

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States. In fact, 1 in 3 Texans will be diagnosed with skin cancer at some point in their life. Even if you don't plan to spend the day at the lake, you are likely to soak up some rays as you run errands, walk your dog or mow the yard. Dr. Martin A. Weinstock, representative from the American Cancer society states that it's impossible to completely avoid sunlight, nor would it be wise. Following are some pointers to use so that your skin will be protected from the sun. According to Dr. Weinstock the best protection is "slip, slop, slap." "Slip on a shirt, slop on some sunscreen and slap on a hat."

Dr. Carol Rice of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service indicated that skin cancer is usually curable if caught early and the best news about skin cancer is that it is easily preventable by following these simple steps:

- Avoid the sun between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm.
- Use a broad-spectrum (UVA / UVB protection) and water resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. It should be applied at least 15 minutes before sun exposure. Re-apply every 2 hours while in the sun, and after swimming or perspiring.

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- Wear a hat with a 3 inch brim to make sure your hat covers your face and neck.
- Cover your arms and legs in the direct sun (dark, tightly woven clothing is best).
- Wear sunglasses with UV protection to protect your eyes from damaging rays.
- Don't fall for the story about indoor tanning being safe!
- Check your skin regularly. Look for new moles or changes in existing moles, dark patches, or long lasting pearly-looking bumps.
- If you need more color in your skin, use a self-tanning lotion that uses DHA, a harmless dye that wears off in 5-7 days. (Recommended by the American Academy of Dermatology).

To learn more about skin cancer and ways to prevent it, be sure to stop by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Sun Safety display at the upcoming Summer Safety and Fun Festival hosted by First United Methodist Church in Decatur. The festival is scheduled for Saturday May 19 from 4-6pm in the Church Parking Lot. Additional activities and information will also be available: Decatur Police and Fire Departments; Fit 'n' Wise; and Decatur Public Library.

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