

## **Avoid getting burned while having fun in the sun**

**Macomb** – Summer is in full swing, and the sun worshippers are out soaking up the rays. But the medical staff at Eagle View Community Health System warns that a golden tan today can be the precursor to unsightly wrinkles tomorrow – or worse yet, the precursor to skin cancer.

The good news is that most of the sun’s harmful effects can be negated by a few simple precautions.

“Always wear a broad-brimmed hat and protective clothing when going outdoors for any length of time,” said Eagle View Clinical Director Leah Shimmin, APN, CNP. “It’s also smart to apply sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 to any exposed skin.”

SPF, or Sun Protection Factor, is a measure of sunscreen’s ability to block out the sun’s harmful ultra violet (UV) rays. The higher the SPF, the better the protection. SPF 15 blocks 93 percent of incoming UVB rays. SPF 30 blocks 97 percent, while an SPF of 50 blocks 99 percent.

It’s also important to apply sunscreen even on cloudy days, since 40 percent of the ultraviolet rays can penetrate through cloud cover.

Other important precautions can help you avoid getting burned. When possible, avoid the sun between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm, when ultraviolet rays are the strongest. If you must be outside, wear a long sleeved shirt and a hat with a brim that covers your face and the back of your neck.

“Following these guidelines may not make you the most fashionable person on the block, but it could save you a lot of grief down the road,” Shimmin said.

Shimmin also notes the importance of regular skin examinations, focusing particularly on moles. Large moles with jagged edges, multiple colors, or lumps may indicate the presence of melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer.

If detected early, melanoma is almost 100 percent curable; consequently, it is important to consult a physician if you suspect you have a problem mole. Call Eagle View’s Macomb clinic at 309-833-2500 or toll free 866-380-9810 to schedule an appointment.