

ST. JOSEPH OLD CATHEDRAL HEALTH MINISTRY NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2024

Happy New Year from the St. Joseph Old Cathedral Health Committee

This month we are highlighting skin cancer. The number of skin cancers in people less than 40 years of age, especially in women, has been increasing. The deadliest form of skin cancer is Melanoma. Melanoma is a kind of skin cancer that starts in the melanocytes. Melanocytes are cells that make the pigment that gives skin its color. The pigment is called melanin. Melanoma typically starts on skin that's often exposed to the sun. This includes the skin on the arms, back, face and legs. Melanoma also can form in the eyes. It can rarely happen inside the body, such as in the nose or throat.

Risk Factors that may increase the risk of melanoma include:

- A family history of melanoma. If a close relative has had melanoma, you have a greater chance of developing a melanoma, too. Close relatives may include a parent, child or sibling.
- A history of sunburn. One or more severe, blistering sunburns can increase your risk of melanoma.
- Exposure to UV light. The ultraviolet light, also called UV light, which comes from the sun and from tanning lights and beds increases the risk of skin cancer, including melanoma.
- Having many moles or moles that aren't typical. Having more than 50 typical moles on your body indicates an increased risk of melanoma. Also, having a type of mole that isn't typical, known medically as dysplastic nevi, these moles tend to be larger than typical moles. They may have unusual borders and a mixture of colors.
- Skin that sunburns easily. Anyone can get melanoma, but it's most common in people with white skin.
- If you have blond or red hair, light-colored eyes, and freckles or sunburn easily, you're more likely to develop melanoma.
- Weakened immune system. If the body's germ-fighting immune system is weakened by medications or illness, there might be a higher risk of melanoma and other skin cancers.

Prevention

You can reduce your risk of melanoma and other types of skin cancer if you:

- Avoid tanning lamps and beds.
- Avoid the sun during the middle of the day.
- Become familiar with your skin so that you'll notice changes.
- Wear protective clothing and sunglasses.
- Wear sunscreen year-round

Keep these pointers in mind anytime you are working or playing outside.

When to see a doctor?

Make an appointment with your doctor or other healthcare professional if you notice any skin changes that worry you.

