

Macomb Township Fire Department

Fire and Life Safety Tips

July 2009

Malignant Melanoma

A friend sent me this and asked if I would pass it along as a life safety tip. We thank her for her contribution to keep the community safe.



Born: 12/13/1961
Died: 07/02/1983

On July 2, 1983 at 11:01 P.M. my sister passed away from complications due to Malignant Melanoma. Every year on the anniversary of her death I send this e-mail to all my friends as a reminder to do self checks and the importance of using sun screen.

Malignant Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer. Fair skinned, blonde/red hair and blue eyed people are at higher risk because their bodies produce less melanin. Melanin gives our skin its color as well as acts as a natural defense against ultraviolet rays. It is estimated that 50% - 70% of Malignant Melanoma develops spontaneously with the remainder developing in a pre-existing mole. Melanoma is not necessarily genetic, unfortunately in my case it is because more than one person has had the disease.

When my sister was diagnosed with Malignant Melanoma, the doctors were reluctant to try chemotherapy partly because she was in the end stages and the cancer had spread through out her body. However, after researching this disease it states that melanomas are resistant to chemotherapy, which is why it is terminal if not diagnosed early.

My family practices the ABCD cancer check on a monthly basis as well as a yearly dermatology exam. The ABCD is defined as follows:

- **A**symmetry: The shape of half a mole is different than the other half.
- **B**order: Edges are ragged, notched, blurred or irregular.
- **C**olor: The color is uneven; black, brown, tan white, grey, red, pink or blue.
- **D**iameter: Change in size. Melanomas are bigger than an eraser of a pencil.

According to the Cancer Society, wearing a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher containing the ingredients Avobenzone (Parsol 1789), Zinc Oxide or Titanium Dioxide can help to block the cancer causing uva/uvb rays.

REFERENCES

Melanoma. (Causes and Treatment)(Disease/Disorder overview)

Clinical Reference Systems. Jan 2006 v2006 i1 pNA.

Full Text: COPYRIGHT 2006 McKesson Health Solutions LLC

http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/HWRC/hits?r=d&origSearch=true&rlt=1&o=&bucket=ref&n=10&l=d&items=0&tcit=1_1_1_1_1&c=4&docNum=A146484354&sgPhrase=true&locID=lom_macombcc&secondary=false&t=RK&s=1&SU=+melanoma

Malignant Melanoma

Source Citation: "Malignant melanoma." Richard A. McCartney, MD. and Rebecca J. Frey, PhD. *The Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine*. Third Edition. Jacqueline L. Longe, Editor. 5 vols. Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2006.

http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/HWRC/hits?r=d&origSearch=true&rlt=1&o=&bucket=ref&n=10&l=d&items=0&tcit=1_1_1_1_1&c=6&docNum=DU2601000867&sgPhrase=true&locID=lom_macombcc&secondary=false&t=RK&s=1&SU=+melanoma