

Protect your skin from the summer sun

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Free skin cancer screenings are available from noon to 3 p.m. Friday (May 20) in the dermatology clinic on the fifth floor of Tulane Medical Center, 1415 Tulane Ave. (Stock image)

As beautiful spring weather beckons, it's important to protect yourself from skin cancer risk. Tulane's Department of Dermatology is offering free skin cancer screenings this month - National Skin Cancer Awareness Month.

"Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States, occurring in 1 in 5 Americans," said Andrea Murina, assistant professor of dermatology.

The screenings are scheduled from noon to 3 p.m. on Friday (May 20), in the Dermatology Clinic on the fifth floor of Tulane Medical Center, 1415 Tulane Ave.

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Risk factors for skin cancer include history of sunburn or excessive sun exposure and family history of melanoma. Individuals with risk factors, those who burn easily or anyone experiencing a recent change in the appearance of a mole should consider being screened.

Screenings involve upper-body skin assessments or spot skin checks by a Tulane dermatologist. If suspicious lesions are found, patients will be encouraged to contact their dermatologist, or they can be referred to a Tulane dermatologist. No treatments or biopsies will be performed, and walk-in patients are welcome.

Melanoma is the most serious and deadly form of skin cancer, accounting for only 1 percent of cases, but the vast majority of skin cancer deaths. Melanoma incidence rates have increased steadily for the last 30 years. However, recent data indicate that rates are declining or plateauing among those younger than 50 - perhaps an indication that health warnings about overexposure to ultraviolet rays from the sun or other sources like tanning beds are gaining traction.

“We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to take charge of their health,” said Murina.

Validated parking is available in Tulane’s LaSalle Street Garage, located on the corner of Tulane and LaSalle streets.

For more information on Tulane’s free skin cancer screenings, please contact the Tulane Dermatology Clinic at 504-988-1700.

Melanie Cross is manager of communications at the Tulane Cancer Center.