Skin Cancer and Your Transplant Medicine

For Your Safety

After an organ transplant, you have a higher risk of skin cancer—and skin cancer can be more serious. Your anti-rejection drugs may be part of this higher risk. The drugs prevent your body from healing or getting rid of sun-damaged cells. The damaged cells can lead to cancer.

Ultraviolet (UV) light is the main cause of skin cancer. This light comes from the sun.

There are two types of UV light: UVA rays and UVB rays. You will need to protect yourself from both.

To prevent skin cancer:
Always protect yourself from the sun. Sun damage can occur in any kind of weather—sunny, cloudy, rainy, snowy, hot or cold.

Avoid the sun in the middle of the day. UV rays are most intense at midday, usually between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Try to stay indoors during those hours.

Cover up. Wear clothing to protect as much skin as possible.

- Dark colors and tightly woven fabrics are best.
- You may wish to buy "sun-protective clothing" (clothes that have built-in UV protection).
- Wear a hat. A two- to three-inch brim will help protect your neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose and scalp.

Wear sunglasses that block UV rays. The label should say one of the following:

- Blocks 99 to 100% of UVA and UVB radiation.
- Blocks UV absorption up to 400 nm.
- Meets ANSI UV requirements.

Use the right sunscreen. It should:

- Have an SPF of 30 (or higher) and
- Protect against UVA and UVB rays

If the label says "broad-spectrum" or "complete blocker," this may not be what you need. Check the label. SPF should be 30, and the sunscreen should contain either avobenzene, ecamsule, zinc oxide or titanium oxide.

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Know how to use your sunscreen.

- Check the expiration date (sometimes called the “use-by date”). If the date has passed, throw away the bottle. The sunscreen may not work as well as it should.
- Follow the directions on the label.
- Put it on 15 to 30 minutes before you go outside. This gives the skin time to absorb the sunscreen.
- Use a large amount. Be sure to put it on your face, ears, hands, arms and feet.
- Add more sunscreen every two hours, or more often if you are sweating or swimming.

Avoid tanning beds and sunlamps.
They are not safe. They give out UVA rays, and often UVB rays as well.

Questions?
If you have questions about sunscreen or your medicines, call Fairview Specialty Pharmacy and ask to speak to a pharmacist.

Fairview | Specialty Pharmacy

TRANSPLANT PROGRAM
3650 Victoria St. N.
Shoreview, MN 55126

Call: 612-617-3700
Toll-free: 1-855-257-0942

Hours:
Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. (CST)
Saturday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. (CST)

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