

## **SUMMERTIME FUN IN THE SUN COMES WITH A PRICE FREE SKIN CANCER SCREENINGS OFFERED**

**SMYRNA, TN.** (MAY 7, 2008) — Summer is right around the corner, and with it comes opportunities for fun in the sun. If poolside or indoor tanning—or any other prolonged exposure to sunlight—is part of your summertime plan, local physicians warn that it could prove costly.

“Purposeful tanning indoors or outdoors poses significant health risks,” said Dr. Anitha Dhar, StoneCrest family physician. “Tanning certainly can cause early skin aging, skin and eye burns, cataracts or allergic reactions, but the most serious risk associated with sun exposure is skin cancer.”

In fact, 1 in 85 people in the United States will develop melanoma, the most dangerous form of skin cancer, at some point in their life. The risk of developing melanoma increases with age, but nonetheless the disease frequently affects young, otherwise healthy people.

“The most important factors contributing to the rise in melanoma rates are exposure to ultraviolet rays (UVR) in early childhood, sunburns and intermittent increased exposure to the sun,” stated Dr. Dhar.

Melanoma can spread very rapidly and is the most deadly form of skin cancer. Although it is less common than other types of skin cancer, the rate of melanoma is steadily increasing, and is currently the leading cause of death associated with skin disease. Melanoma may appear on normal skin, or it may begin as a mole or other area that has changed in appearance. Some moles present at birth may develop into melanomas.

According to Dr. Dhar, the development of melanoma is related to sun exposure—particularly to sunburns during childhood—and is most common among people with fair skin, blue or green eyes, and red or blond hair.

### **Other risk factors include the following:**

- Family history of melanoma
- Presence of multiple birthmarks
- Development of precancerous lesions
- Obvious freckling on the upper back
- Three or more blistering sunburns before age 20
- Three or more years spent at an outdoor summer job as a teenager
- High levels of exposure to strong sunlight

“The primary symptom of any skin cancer is usually a mole, sore, lump, or growth on the skin,” said Dr. Dhar. “Any change in appearance of a pigmented skin lesion over time is a warning sign. Also, watch for any bleeding from a skin growth.”

Skin cancers are mainly found on areas of the body that are exposed to the sun, such as the head, face, ears, neck, hands and arms. The key to treating melanoma is recognizing symptoms early. You might not notice a small spot of concern if you don't look carefully, so perform thorough self-examinations on a regular basis, and contact your doctor if you notice any change in areas on your skin that are susceptible to skin cancer.

The Nashville Dermatology Society has collaborated with TriStar Health System to offer **free skin cancer screenings** at three locations (Centennial Medical Center, Skyline Medical Center and StoneCrest Medical Center) **on Saturday, May 10 from 8:00 a.m. to NOON**. For more information and to register for screenings, call Tristar Medline at 615-342-1919.

StoneCrest Medical Center, a member of the TriStar Health System, offers a full array of acute care services including emergency care, general surgery, cardiology, obstetrics, intensive care, physical medicine, outpatient diagnostic services, and cancer care, including radiology in a community setting. Situated on 43 acres at the intersection of Interstate 24 and Sam Ridley Parkway, StoneCrest Medical Center currently offers 75 private patient rooms and has announced an expansion that will culminate in 101 total beds. Additionally, the 160,000 square foot physician's building is adjacent to the medical center, providing convenient access from physician offices to the hospital. For more information or for a free physician referral, call TriStar MedLine<sup>SM</sup> at 615-342-1919 or visit [TriStarHealth.com](http://TriStarHealth.com).

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