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Building Trades National Medical Screening Program

P.O. Box 900960 ▪ Seattle, WA 98109 ▪ 1-800-866-9663 

UV RADIATION

What is UV Radiation?

UV (Ultraviolet) radiation is an invisible part of the sun's rays. Everyone who works in the sun is exposed to them. "UVA" and "UVB" are the two types of UV radiation that have health effects. Both penetrate into the skin and can cause tissue damage.

Unprotected, long-term exposure to UV radiation can increase the risk of developing skin cancer, the most common form of cancer in the United States. This risk goes down significantly when measures are taken to minimize exposure to the sun's rays, including the use of sunscreen, working in the shade, and wearing protective clothing.

What is the exam looking for?

The exam looks for signs of skin cancer, a highly treatable cancer if caught early. Malignant melanoma, a rare but serious form of skin cancer, can be fatal without prompt treatment. Warning signs of skin cancer include the presence of irregularly-shaped moles, large moles, and moles that change size or shape over time.

You will receive a summary letter and photocopies of your test results. All your results are confidential as defined in your Consent Statement.

What if my test results are positive?

Based on your history and exam results, you may be referred to your doctor or a specialist. To know for sure if a mole is cancerous, a skin specialist can perform testing on your skin. If you are found to have a form of skin cancer, prompt treatment may prevent it from becoming dangerous.

What other steps should I take?

If you still work outdoors, follow all available precautions and use the protective equipment provided to you. Wear sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher, wear wide-brimmed hats, and take breaks in the shade. Check your sunscreen to be sure it protects against both UVA and UVB rays. Ask a health care professional for materials on how to perform skin cancer self-exams.

What if I have more questions?

If you have any questions, ask your personal physician or call our toll-free number at 1-800-866-9663.