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Skin Cancer Still Poses A Threat In Winter

Skin cancer may be something on the minds of beachgoers and summer revelers frolicking around the pool. After all, when the sun is blazing hot and one's skin reddens after mere minutes outside, it's hard to ignore the potential for skin damage. But summer isn't the only time of year that skin must be protected.

According to the health and wellness resource Cancer Therapy Advisor, ultraviolet radiation is just as dangerous in the winter as it is in the summer, and people should continue to care for and protect their skin as the weather gets colder. In fact, sunscreen is something that should be worn year-round.

Various lifestyle choices increase a person's risk for skin damage and even skin cancer.

- Spending time outdoors in high altitudes: MD Anderson Cancer Centers warns that UV rays are especially intense in higher altitudes. The risk for sunburn increases because the thinner atmosphere isn't able to block many of the sun's most harmful rays.

- Enjoying snow-related activities: Snow reflects up to 80 percent of the sun's rays. Individuals may not realize that time spent on the slopes can result in sun damage that is just as harmful as that caused after a day at the beach.

- Heading out on cloudy days: Fog and clouds will not deter UVA rays from reaching the surface of the Earth. UVA rays, which are present throughout the



Skiing exposes people to higher altitudes, where the thin atmosphere cannot effectively block harmful rays from the sun.

year, can penetrate fog and clouds and even glass, warns the Skin Cancer Foundation.

- Traveling to warm climates in winter: It's common for people to try to escape the cold and snow by vacationing in tropical locales during the winter. Many may mistakenly think it's a good idea to use a tanning bed to get a golden glow prior to departing. The Mayo Clinic reports that UV light from tanning beds is 12 times as intense as light emitted by the sun. Couple that with time spent in the tropical sun and severe damage can occur to unprotected skin.

Protecting skin from the sun is a year-round endeavor. When thinking about skin damage and skin cancer prevention, do not overlook the lips as well, as the skin on the lips is very sensitive. Use a lip moisturizer with an SPF of at least 15 and sunscreen on the rest of the exposed parts of the body every day.