Playing It Safe in the Summer Sun

Summertime is all about fun in the sun and promoting spiritual health by getting outside to commune with nature.

But, did you know that according to the Skin Cancer Foundation, one in five Americans will develop skin cancer, the most common type of cancer in the United States, and one dies of skin cancer every hour?

With the beautiful weather and days spent outdoors at the park, the beach and the golf course, your skin may be getting more sun exposure now that at other times of the year.

It's a great time to safely take part in outdoor spiritual practices like gardening and spending time in nature.

While you're enjoying the great outdoors, it's important to be aware of how much sunlight you get. Ultraviolet (or UV) radiation is the main cause of skin cancer and can also cause damage to your eyes. For these reasons, avoiding overexposure to UV light is the simplest form of prevention.

July is UV Safety Month. Here are some simple steps from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help prevent overexposure to UV rays:

- Seek shade, especially during midday hours
- Cover up with clothing to protect exposed skin
- Wear a hat with a wide brim to shade the face, head, ears and neck
- Wear sunglasses that wrap around and block as close to 100 percent of both UVA and UVB rays as possible
- Put on sunscreen with broad spectrum (UVA and UVB) protection and sun protective factor (SPF) 15 or higher
- Avoid tanning beds and sunlamps - the UV rays from them are as dangerous as the UV rays from the sun

You can also schedule a skin examination with your health care professional, including your Primary Care Physician (PCP), to catch early signs of cancer before they become a serious threat.

Getting annual physicals and tests from your doctor is key in sustaining your health and preventing disease. Having a PCP who can coordinate your care is vital to your good health. A PCP typically specializes in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine or General Practice.

If you don't have a PCP, finding one is easy! Just visit your insurance carrier's website, look for the "find a doctor" area and follow the instructions.