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NEWS RELEASES

June 1-7 is Sun Safety Week

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States, said Susanne Smith, Deputy Director of the Otsego County Department of Health. It is estimated that one in five Americans will develop some form of skin cancer during their lifetime.

June 1 to 7 is Sun Safety Week when we are reminded that it is important to make sure we know the best way to protect ourselves and our families.

The sun sends out harmful ultraviolet rays (UV-A and UV-B), which we cannot see. UV-B: (Ultraviolet B Radiation) rays penetrate the upper layers of the skin, causing sunburn. UV-B is most intense in the summer months between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. To protect yourself from these rays, Susanne Smith recommends using a product with an SPF of at least 15.

Long-term, unprotected exposure to these UV rays causes up to 90 percent of all skin cancer. Understanding how to protect yourself and your family from the sun is the only way to prevent skin damage and premature skin aging.

The Otsego County Department of Health advises everyone to:

- Use sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher every day. Choose a sunscreen that offers UV-A and UV-B protection and is water-resistant or waterproof for playing in the water.
- Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside and reapply every two hours. Reapply more often, especially after swimming, perspiring or toweling off.
- Rub a generous amount of sunscreen on all uncovered skin. Do not apply to the eyes. Light clothing does not filter out all UV rays, so use sunscreen on areas that will be covered by light clothing, as well.
- Use a sunscreen stick or lip balm on sensitive areas, such as the lips, nose, ears, hands and feet.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and UV protective sunglasses to protect the face and eyes.
- Be especially careful on cloudy or hazy days. Clouds do not block most UV rays. Also, be careful around surfaces, such as sand, cement, water and snow that can reflect the sun's damaging rays on the skin.
- When in the sun, be aware of the effects of certain medications. Some prescription and over-the-counter medications can cause the skin to be more sensitive to the sun.

For more information on how to protect your skin from the summer sun, call the Otsego County Department of Health at (607)547-4230.

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