

HEALTH

For Your Health



BY LARRY LUCAS

Preventing Skin Cancer

Americans begin happily spending more time outdoors. Whether having a picnic, playing sports, going for a long walk or just enjoying the sunshine, many of our families' activities – and memorable moments – will take place outside.

But it's important that we don't forget about our health during the summer months. Not only does the season bring longer days and higher temperatures, it also brings a greater risk of melanoma, the fastest growing cancer in the United States.

It's easy to lose track of time when you're having fun in the sun. A morning hike can easily lead to an afternoon swim and then an evening barbecue. Unfor-

tunately, all of that time outdoors can result in irreversible skin damage caused by the sun's rays. Across the U.S., approximately one in five people will get skin cancer in his or her lifetime, the most dangerous form of which is melanoma.

Melanoma is often caused by intense, occasional UV exposure that frequently leads to sunburn, and if not treated early, melanoma can cause malignant tumors. Unfortunately, as few as 48 percent of melanomas in African Americans are diagnosed at an early stage,

compared to 84 percent in Caucasians.

When melanoma goes undetected, the cancer can advance and spread to other parts of the body, making it hard to treat. So although Caucasians are the primary victims of melanoma, the cancer is more fatal for those in the African American community: The overall melanoma survival rate for African Americans is only 77 percent, versus 91 percent for Caucasians.

Recognizing the warning signs of melanoma is vital. That's why physicians recommend regular head-to-toe self-examinations for any skin changes. According to the American Melanoma Foundation, a sudden or continuous change in the appearance of a mole is a sign

that you should see your doctor.

To help you know what to look for, remember these signs: Asymmetry – one half of the mole is different than the other half. Borders – edges of the mole are irregular, blurred or uneven. Color – uneven color, or shades of brown, tan, or black. Diameter – the mole is greater than 6 millimeters in diameter.

The good news is that there are easy steps we can take to prevent melanoma before it starts. Protection from the sun is the single greatest way to prevent melanoma. When spending time outdoors, make sure you wear sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher, and reapply every two hours.

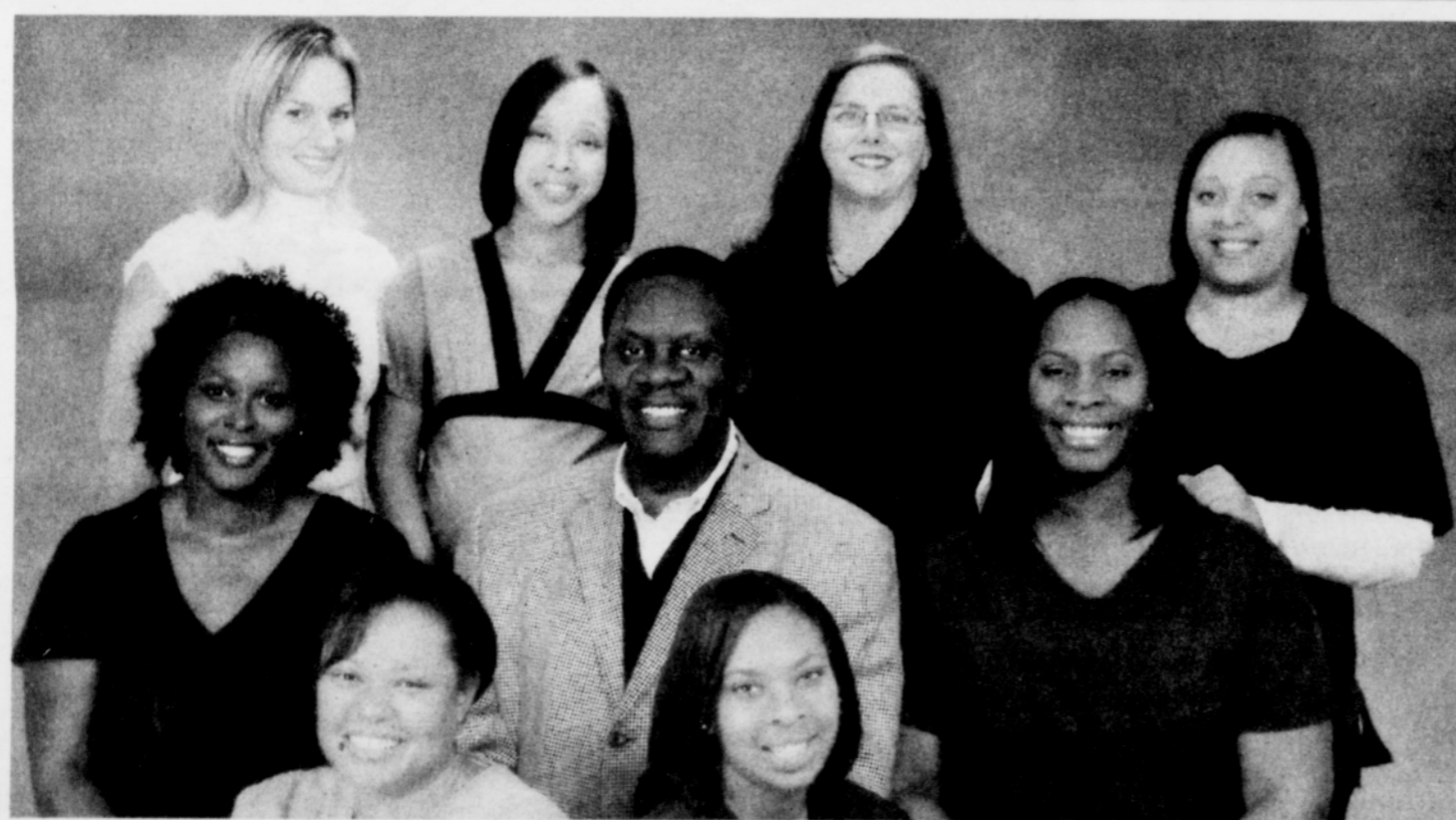
During the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., try to seek the shade when

possible, and use a broad-brimmed hat and UV-blocking sunglasses to cover up.

As we give a warm welcome to the summer months and the fun they bring, it's critical that we recognize the importance of taking care of our skin. Enjoy the great outdoors, but remember to protect yourself and your loved ones from the sun's dangers.

For patients who need help paying for their prescriptions, the Partnership for Prescription Assistance is available to help. For more information, visit pparx.org or call 1-888-4PPA-NOW.

Larry Lucas is a retired vice president for the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.



Dr. Billy R. Flowers (above center) and his skilled staff are ready to help those in need.

THE SPINA COLUMN™

An ongoing series of questions and answers about America's natural healing profession.

Part 13. Shoulder Pain: Why many people cannot, and should not, take it lying down.

Q: My shoulders hurt so bad at times, I can hardly sleep. What can Chiropractic do for me that no one else has been able to?

A: Shoulder pain is without question, one of the most debilitating types of pain we encounter. Because the shoulder is so intricately related to the spine, virtually any movement can be excruciating. It is not at all uncommon to see cases like yours where patients' hurt so bad, they cannot even get a decent night's sleep. To Complicate matters, many patients go from doctor to doctor seeking relief, being told they have

bursitis at one office, tenosynovitis at another and so on until they return home confused, frustrated and still in agony. As Chiropractors, we are concerned about nerve flow to the various parts of the body. Of course, we look to see if a bursal sac has been traumatized or if a tendon has been injured. But more importantly, we look to see what caused the injury. You see,

the cause was there long before the pain itself. By treating the cause, we not only relieve the pain, don't suffer through another sleepless night. Call for an appointment to find out how Chiropractic can eliminate the cause of the problem once and for all. Or feel free to call us if you have any questions whatsoever about your health.

Flowers' Chiropractic Office

2124 N.E. Hancock Street, Portland Oregon 97212

Phone: (503) 287-5504

HEALTH WATCH

Free Body Basics -- This physician recommended class is appropriate for all ages and health conditions. Plan to attend this one-session class and learn the simple guidelines for safe exercises, including stretching. Call 503-256-4000 to register.

Cholesterol Profiles -- Get the resources to help you keep an eye on your cholesterol and other indicators of heart health. Educational material provided. For more information, call 503-261-6611.

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Empowerment through Relaxation -- Free informal meditation classes that address breathing techniques, some gentle ancient African yoga poses and mental balancing techniques. People have left these classes joyful and with a peaceful view of their lives. Call Dr. Marcelite Failla at 503-228-6140.

The Portland Observer Established 1970

USPS 959-680

4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Portland, OR 97211

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, PUBLISHER: Charles H. Washington

EDITOR: Michael Leighton

ASSISTANT TO PUBLISHER, PUBLIC RELATIONS: Mark Washington

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Paul Neufeldt

ASSISTANT TO PUBLISHER, OFFICE MANAGER/CLASSIFIEDS: Lucinda Baldwin

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER: Leonard Latin

ADVERTISING MANAGER, PUBLIC RELATIONS: Tony Washington

STAFF WRITER/PHOTOGRAPHER: Mindy Cooper

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Portland Observer, PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

CALL 503-288-0033 FAX 503-288-0015

news@portlandobserver.com ads@portlandobserver.com

subscription@portlandobserver.com

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