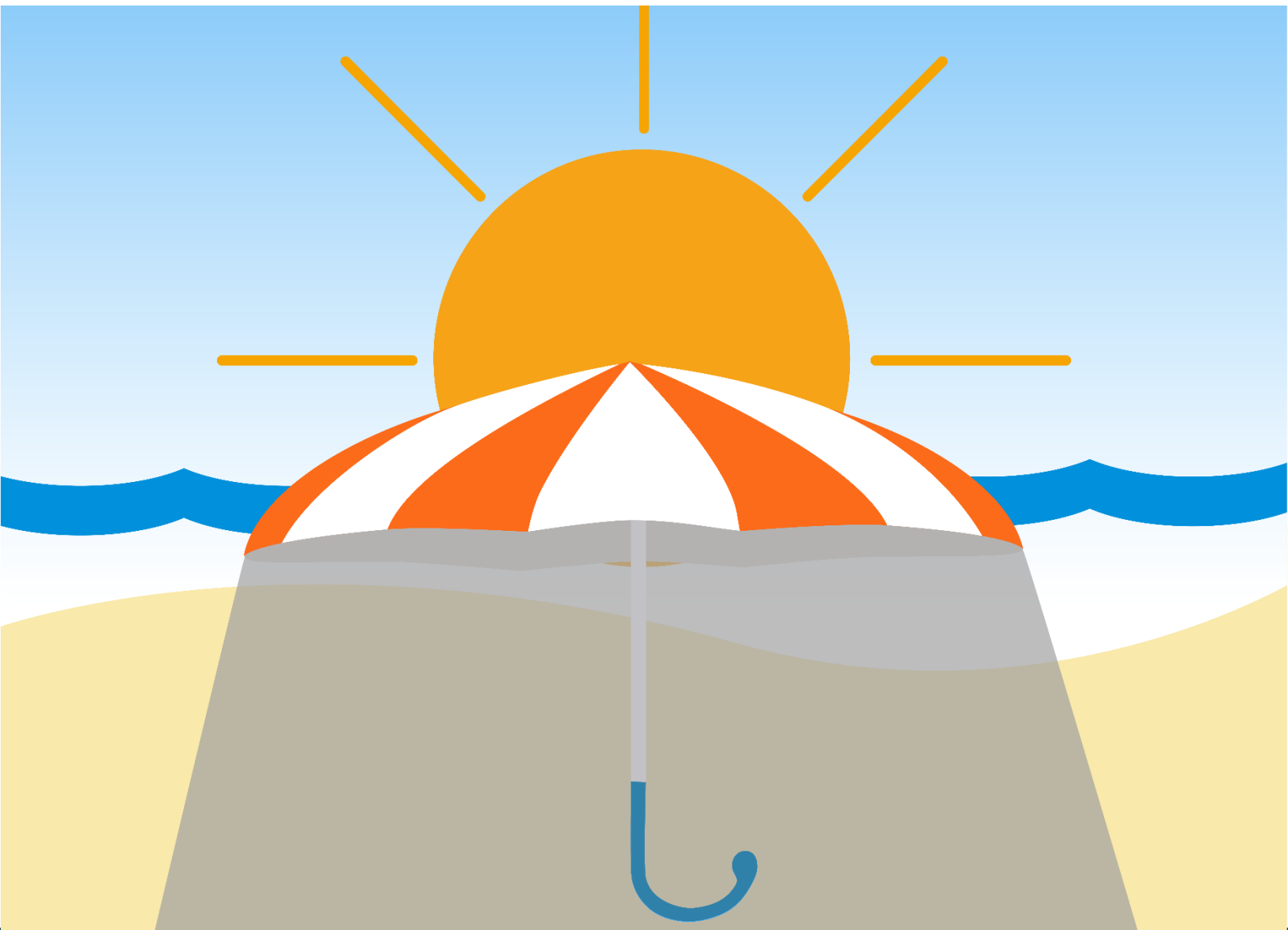


May 2021

Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month Social Media Toolkit



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Tip: Viewing this PDF in Google Chrome? Use “Ctrl+Click” on links to open them in a new tab.

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ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to help stakeholders implement evidence-based practices when communicating about melanoma and skin cancer. It can also help you plan, implement and evaluate your social media strategy and make the case for why it's important.

Don't have the time or capacity to implement this toolkit? Don't fret! You can still engage your audience by retweeting messages from [@GWCancer](#)

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT?

Public health professionals, cancer control professionals, cancer centers, coalitions, community-based organizations and other stakeholders can use this toolkit and adapt its messaging for their unique audiences and areas of expertise.

WHAT IS MELANOMA AND SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH?

Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month is an annual opportunity to raise awareness about melanoma and skin cancer and focus on research into their cause, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and survivorship. The goal is to support those affected by melanoma and skin cancer and encourage health-promoting behaviors such as getting screened and following sun safety practices. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States (CDC, 2020). In 2017, 85,686 new melanomas were diagnosed, and 8,056 people died from melanoma (U.S.C.S., 2020). Melanoma accounts for the vast majority of skin cancer deaths (ACS, 2021). Melanoma/Skin Cancer Awareness Month begins on May 1st and ends on May 31st. The Friday before Memorial Day is designated as "Don't Fry Day" to encourage sun safety awareness (National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention, 2019).

SOCIAL MEDIA 101

This toolkit offers recommended posts for [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#). For information about social media platforms, key terms, and strategies to promote health observances using social media, please review the social media guide available at <http://bit.ly/GWCCSMTKs>.

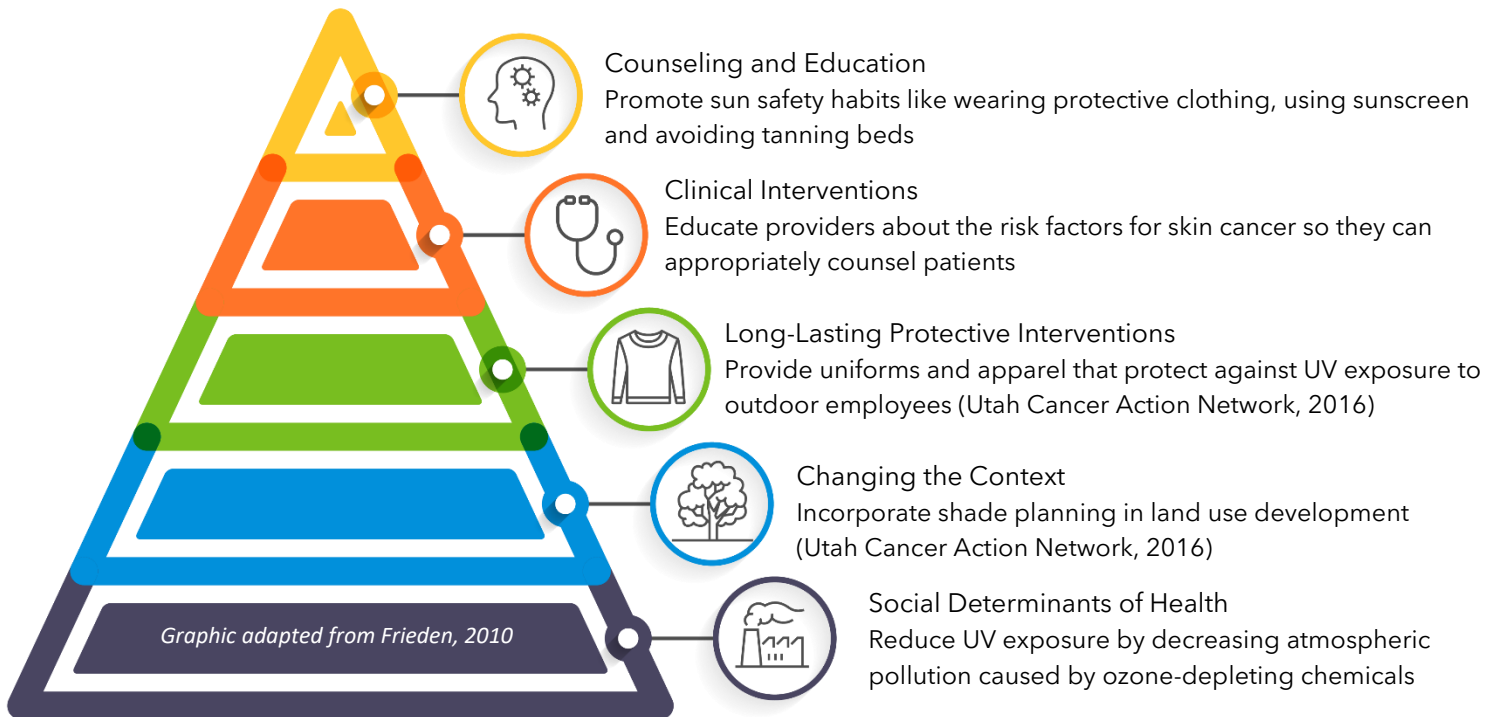


BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNICATING ABOUT MELANOMA AND SKIN CANCER

Early detection and prevention continue to be proven tools to reduce the burden of melanoma in the United States. However, risk factors like indoor tanning (which significantly increases lifetime risk of melanoma) continue to pose a threat. According to the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, 4.5% of American high schoolers reported using indoor tanning, with white high school age girls using indoor tanning the most (CDC, 2019). Nationwide, nearly 60% of high school students reported a sunburn in the previous year (Kann et al., 2018; Holman et al., 2018).

Messages around melanoma and skin cancer prevention should (1) provide education about risk factors and prevention strategies; (2) highlight the dangers of indoor tanning and correct misinformation about tanning and pro-tan social norms; and (3) emphasize the importance of policy, systems and environmental (PSE) change strategies to reduce the impact of skin cancer and melanoma at the community level. When crafting materials and messages, always consider the health literacy level of your audience and use plain language.

Strategies to Reduce the Impact of Melanoma and Skin Cancer



MESSAGES SHOULD...

1. Provide education about risk factors and prevention strategies

- **Emphasize that sun exposure adds up daily and happens every time you are in the sun.** Some people may think about sun safety only when they spend a summer day at the beach or pool (ACS, 2019).
- **Avoid promoting sunscreen as the only form of skin sun protection.** Combine sunscreen with protective clothing, wide-brimmed hats, sunglasses, and shade (CDC, 2020a).
- **Educate your audience about the possible signs and symptoms of melanoma, like the “ABCDE rule”** (Asymmetry, Border, Color, Diameter, Evolving) (ACS, 2019a).
- **Present information in formats that are clear and easy to understand.** People preferred genomic risk information about melanoma to be presented in visuals like an icon array format (Hamilton et al., 2020; Smit et al., 2015).
- **Encourage your audience to know their family history, as this can be an important step in motivating behaviors to reduce risk.** A family history of melanoma can elevate an individual’s risk for the disease (Bowen et al., 2017).
- **Inform your audience that for people of color, skin cancer is often diagnosed too late, making it harder to treat** (Skin Cancer Foundation, 2021). The 5-year survival rate for Blacks is 69.8% compared to 93.1% for Whites (Chao et al., 2017).

2. Highlight the dangers of indoor tanning and correct misinformation about tanning and pro-tanning norms

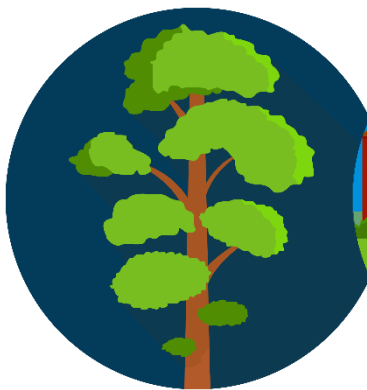
- **Emphasize both the costs of engaging in indoor tanning and the benefits of avoiding it.** Health communication messages can use either a gain frame (emphasizing the benefits of avoiding risky behaviors), a loss frame (emphasizing the costs of engaging in risky behavior) or a balanced frame (emphasizing both gain and loss themes relatively equally). Evidence suggests that both loss- and balanced-framed messages are effective (Mays and Evans, 2017).
- **Use graphic images when conveying the dangers of indoor tanning.** Warnings about indoor tanning are most effective when they include graphic images and loss framing (Hamilton et al., 2020; Mays & Tercyak, 2015).
- **Be cautious when addressing myths associated with tanning and present the preferred message clearly.** Listing myths about tanning can backfire, leading the audience to remember the myth instead of the preferred behavior (Schwarz et al., 2007).
- **Highlight people who would approve of your audience quitting indoor tanning, like parents, friends or romantic partners** (Bleakley et al., 2018). Social norms regarding tanning or tanned skin (such as having friends that are tan or use indoor tanning devices) are associated with indoor tanning among teens (Watson et al., 2013).

- **Address appearance concerns and psychological effects of tanning associated with feeling more attractive. Highlight the short-term gains of quitting, like saving money** (Glanz et al., 2019).

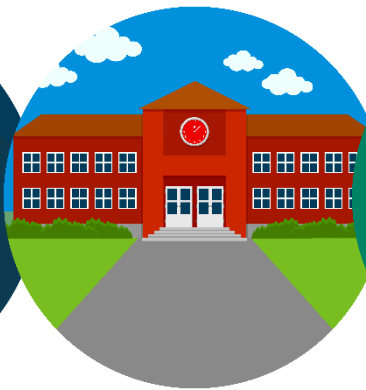
3. Emphasize the importance of policy, systems and environmental (PSE) change strategies to reduce the impact of melanoma and skin cancer at the community level

- **Combine PSE change with a strong communication strategy to make your efforts more effective.**
- **Explain to your audience why the data is relevant and how it impacts your audience.** Use cancer data to inform PSE change efforts (NCI, 2011).
- **Engage with other partners like local parks, recreational facilities, clinicians and outdoor community events to promote your efforts.** Ensure you are following and communicating with relevant partners and intended audiences on social media.
- **Learn from other organizations' successful interventions to reduce the impact of melanoma and skin cancer.** Highlight your organization's success stories through tools like [Action for PSE Change](#) or [CDC's Skin Cancer Prevention Success Stories](#).
- **Focus on community engagement to empower communities to take part in the PSE change process and advocate for their own health.** Community-based systematic changes lead to more consistent long-term health improvements than temporary interventions (ACS, 2015).

Sample PSE Change Ideas to Consider



Provision of shade in development projects



School policies




Policies for outdoor workers



Indoor tanning legislation

Tip: These correspond to the strategies above.



SAMPLE TWEETS AND FACEBOOK POSTS

Tweets	Facebook Posts	Message Category
<p>May is #SkinCancerAwareness month! Kick it off by checking out @CDCgov's new #MelanomaDashboard for relevant prevention data: https://bit.ly/33mzgRA</p>	<p>Did you know that May is skin cancer awareness month? Check out CDC's new #MelanomaDashboard for access to the most recent and relevant data to maximize the impact of our skin cancer prevention efforts: https://bit.ly/33mzgRA</p>	1
<p>Programs have found many innovative ways to help prevent #skincancer in their communities. Learn more: http://bit.ly/2JhhyFY @CDC_Cancer</p>	<p>Communities across the country are finding innovative ways to reduce the burden of skin cancer and melanoma. Explore their stories and learn more: http://bit.ly/2JhhyFY</p>	2,3
<p>If someone in your family has had #melanoma, you may be at increased risk. Learn about skin cancer risk factors from @CDCgov: https://bit.ly/2WYlstq</p>	<p>Did you know that your risk may increase if someone in your family has had melanoma? It's important to know your family history. For more on skin cancer risk factors: https://bit.ly/2WYlstq</p>	1
<p>Just a few serious sunburns can increase your child's risk for #skincancer later in life, but there are steps you can take to protect them: http://bit.ly/2IVkuJ8</p>	<p>Kids don't have to be at the pool, beach, or on vacation to get too much sun. Their skin needs protection from the sun's harmful UV rays whenever they are outdoors. Learn more: http://bit.ly/2IVkuJ8</p>	1,2
<p>What can you do to reduce your risk of skin cancer, including #melanoma? Get some tips: http://bit.ly/2GPxn6i</p>	<p>What can you do to reduce your risk of skin cancer, including melanoma? Avoid indoor tanning, use sunscreen, and stay in the shade during midday hours: http://bit.ly/2GPxn6i</p>	1,2
<p>Sunlamps and tanning beds promise a bronzed body year-round, but the UV radiation from these devices poses serious health risks: http://bit.ly/2VG1eFy</p>	<p>Any tan is a sign of skin damage. Over time, use of devices like indoor tanning beds can lead to prematurely aged skin, and, in some cases, skin cancer: http://bit.ly/2VG1eFy</p>	2
<p>You do everything you can to keep your family healthy. Protect them from #skincancer with these tips: http://bit.ly/2Gulclp</p>	<p>Did you know you can protect your family and yourself from skin cancers like melanoma? Start with these tips from CDC to stay sun safe outdoors: http://bit.ly/2Gulclp</p>	1
<p>Share your #SunSafeSelfie and join the conversation to raise awareness on sun protection! https://bit.ly/3dzFbJJ</p>	<p>Share your #SunSafeSelfie and join the conversation to raise awareness on the benefits of sun protection! https://bit.ly/3dzFbJJ</p>	1

SAMPLE TWEETS AND FACEBOOK POSTS (CONTINUED)

Tweets	Facebook Posts	Message Category
Every time you use an indoor tanning bed, your skin is exposed to damaging UV rays. Use a self-tanning product instead: https://bit.ly/2RsUlnw	Tanning, both indoors and out, can lead to wrinkles, age spots and skin cancer. Use a self-tanning product instead. Here's how to apply self-tanner: https://bit.ly/2RsUlnw	2
#DYK community skin cancer prevention programs can prevent future #melanoma cases? Learn more: http://bit.ly/2GuFlgn	What can you do in your community to help prevent skin cancer? Community-based programs can prevent future cases and lower treatment costs: http://bit.ly/2GuFlgn	3
Exercising or being outside is great, but don't forget your sun protection! http://bit.ly/2uHWX8a	Exercising or being outdoors has both physical and mental health benefits. Don't forget your sunscreen and hat when you're getting your sweat on with Mother Nature! More tips here: http://bit.ly/2uHWX8a	2
#CompCancer professionals: Looking for evidence-based interventions to prevent #melanoma in your community? Start here: https://bit.ly/2XykLbq	Looking for evidence-based interventions to prevent melanoma and other skin cancers in your community? The Community Guide is a great place to start: https://bit.ly/2XykLbq	3
What's being done at @theNCI to combat #melanoma? Learn more: http://bit.ly/2q2eu6h	Get the basics about melanoma and research into new treatments at the National Cancer Institute: http://bit.ly/2q2eu6h	1,3
Parents: #DYK you can influence your teen's decisions about starting (and stopping) indoor tanning? http://bit.ly/2vljZK2	One in three people who tan indoors started before age 18, and over half started tanning before age 21. Learn more: http://bit.ly/2vljZK2	2
Today is "Don't Fry Day!" Take a moment to make sure you're protecting yourself against #skincancer & #melanoma: http://bit.ly/2Eto8bw	Did you know today is "Don't Fry Day!"? Help us raise awareness and reduce the rates of skin cancer, including melanoma: http://bit.ly/2Eto8bw	1,3
Schools and colleges can play an active role in preventing skin cancers like #melanoma. Here's how you can get involved: http://bit.ly/2GvqWl7	What can schools and colleges do to prevent melanoma and protect students from UV damage? This CDC resource has some practical tips: http://bit.ly/2GvqWl7	3
Post your #SunSafeSelfie showing off how you use a combination of sun- safe strategies to protect yourself from sun damage! https://bit.ly/3dzFblJ	Post your #SunSafeSelfie showing off how you use a combination of sun-safe strategies to protect yourself from sun damage! https://bit.ly/3dzFblJ	1

SAMPLE TWEETS AND FACEBOOK POSTS (CONTINUED)

Tweets	Facebook Posts	Message Category
What are some of the signs of #melanoma? This guide from @CDCgov can help you assess changes in your skin: http://bit.ly/2GSmXTc	Do you know the ABCDEs of melanoma? This handy guide reminds you to regularly check for changes in your skin and what to look for: http://bit.ly/2GSmXTc	1
#CompCancer professionals: Looking for PSE change solutions to prevent skin cancer? Start here: https://bit.ly/2Vj04Ob #MelanomaAwareness	Comprehensive Cancer Control Professionals: Looking for policy, systems and environmental (PSE) change strategies to prevent skin cancer? Start with this Surgeon General Call to Action: https://bit.ly/2Vj04Ob	3
#DYK that indoor tanning not only costs you money, but costs the US millions of healthcare spending each year? Save money for yourself and for our healthcare system by quitting indoor tanning. Use a self-tanner instead: http://bit.ly/2JbCcaH	Did you know that indoor tanning not only costs you money, but costs the US millions of health care spending each year? Save money for yourself and for our healthcare system by quitting indoor tanning. There are many affordable and natural self-tanners that you can use instead: http://bit.ly/2JbCcaH	1,2,3
Looking out for #skincancer? Check for new, changing, or unusual moles: http://bit.ly/2GTLjKu	When checking your skin for skin cancer, look out for new, changing, or unusual moles: http://bit.ly/2GTLjKu	2,3
Help spread the word about preventing #skincancer w/these resources from @AADskin: http://bit.ly/2jAitRG	The first step toward a world without skin cancer is educating others about prevention and early detection. The American Academy of Dermatology has resources to help you spread the word: http://bit.ly/2jAitRG	1,3
Get the facts about #melanoma, including treatment info, from @theNCI: http://bit.ly/2GSDNBm	Melanoma is a disease in which cancer cells form in melanocytes (cells that color the skin). Get more facts about melanoma and its treatment: http://bit.ly/2GSDNBm	1
When detected early, #skincancer is highly treatable. Learn the ABCDEs of melanoma to check yourself and your partner: https://bit.ly/2xbuiuw	Simple memory tools like the ABCDEs of melanoma can help you identify the warning signs of melanoma. Check your partner, check yourself: https://bit.ly/2xbuiuw	1,2
When skin cancer develops in non sun-exposed areas, it's often in a late stage when diagnosed. Luckily, you can find #skincancer early. Check out these tips: https://bit.ly/3dwS59o	When skin cancer develops in non sun-exposed areas, it's often in a late stage when diagnosed. Luckily, you can find skin cancer early. Check out these tips on how you can look for warning signs: https://bit.ly/3dwS59o	1
#Melanoma can occur in areas that get little sun exposure, like the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, and nail areas: https://bit.ly/2QTkezv	Melanoma can occur in areas that get little sun exposure, like the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, and nail areas. Learn more: https://bit.ly/2QTkezv	1

SAMPLE TWEETS AND FACEBOOK POSTS FOR COVID-19

Tweets	Facebook Posts	Message Category
Notice a suspicious mole or lesion? Don't delay seeking care from a dermatologist even during #COVID19: https://bit.ly/3ki4Mb1	Notice a suspicious mole or lesion? Don't delay seeking care from a dermatologist even during COVID-19: https://bit.ly/3ki4Mb1	1
During #COVID19, telemedicine may be a safe and effective option for preventing #skincancer. Consult with your dermatologist: https://bit.ly/3vZp922	During COVID-19, telehealth services may be a safe and effective option for preventing skin cancer. Consult with your dermatologist to see if this would work for you: https://bit.ly/3vZp922	1
According to @AADskin, there is no compelling evidence that the sun or tanning beds can kill #COVID19 in people. Be sure to protect your skin during the pandemic: https://bit.ly/3spRbS4	According to the American Academy of Dermatology Association, there is no compelling evidence that the sun or tanning beds can kill COVID-19 in people. Be sure to protect your skin during the pandemic: https://bit.ly/3spRbS4	1,2
While spending time indoors during #COVID19, sunlight streaming through glass can still harm your skin with UV rays. Wear SPF even while inside: https://bit.ly/3dbW3ns	While spending time indoors during COVID-19, sunlight streaming through glass can still harm your skin with UV rays. Wear SPF even while inside: https://bit.ly/3dbW3ns	1,2
#COVID19 resulted in delays in diagnosis and treatment of melanoma. Healthcare professionals: utilize teledermatology to close the gap caused by the pandemic: https://bit.ly/2PZmDlz	COVID-19 resulted in delays in diagnosis and treatment of melanoma. Healthcare professionals: utilize teledermatology to close the gap caused by the pandemic: https://bit.ly/2PZmDlz	1
#Cancer patients and survivors, including those with skin cancer, may be at higher risk for a more serious infection if they get #COVID19. Lower your risk of infection by following this guidance: http://bit.ly/2JPXH3p	Cancer patients and survivors may be at higher risk for more serious infection if they get COVID-19. Lower your risk of infection by following this guidance: http://bit.ly/2JPXH3p	1,3
#Healthcare professionals: During #COVID19, prioritize those most at-risk for complications from delayed care from skin cancer and those without access to #telehealth services. Review at-risk populations here: https://bit.ly/3cpXek3	Healthcare professionals: During the COVID-19 pandemic, prioritize those most at-risk for complications from delayed care and those without access to telehealth services. Review at-risk populations and others who need to take extra precautions here: https://bit.ly/3cpXek3	1

SAMPLE LINKEDIN POSTS

LinkedIn Message	Message Category
Healthcare Professionals: May is a great time to brush up on current information about skin cancer screening. This summary from the National Cancer Institute provides an overview and description of the evidence: http://bit.ly/2Ya9ZVS	1
Skin cancer is one of the top 10 cancers for new cases and for cancer deaths in the United States. This data visualization tool presents U.S. Cancer Statistics data and demographic trends in an easy-to-understand visual format: http://bit.ly/2KxPy3r	1
May is a great time to spread the word about melanoma and skin cancer prevention with these resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: https://bit.ly/2QIBLdO	1,2
Healthcare Professionals: Be sure to counsel your patients who are at high risk for melanoma - including fair-skinned patients and melanoma survivors of any age - to use sun safety practices: https://bit.ly/2HBZXug	1
Despite the challenges we face during the COVID-19 pandemic, prevention of melanoma and other skin cancers remains a public health priority: https://bit.ly/31ofhAY	1,3



Remember that other suggestions on social media strategies, links to images and graphics, analytic tools, and a glossary of social media terms can be found in the GW Cancer Center's Social Media Guide at <http://bit.ly/GWCCSMTKs>

ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Tool	Description
Basic Information About Skin Cancer	This resource from the CDC includes information on skin cancer, the risks, symptoms, prevention, and treatments.
How to SPOT Skin Cancer	This infographic from the American Academy of Dermatology Association can be used to regularly check skin.
Moles to Melanoma: Recognizing the ABCDE Features	This resource from the National Cancer Institute has collected photographs of different pigmented skin lesions to help patients and other individuals recognize common moles, atypical moles, and melanomas.
National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention	The mission of this organization is to prevent skin cancer through education, advocacy, and raising awareness.
Prevention and Control of Skin Cancer	In this resource, the CDC discusses the prevention and control of skin cancer, with particular attention to how we can all help people protect their skin and lives while enjoying the outdoors
Preventing Skin Cancer: Community Wide Interventions	These interventions from the Community Preventative Services Task Force seek to increase preventative behaviors within a community by targeting a large part of the population in a defined area.
Sun Safety Evidence-Based Programs Listing	This list of sun-safety interventions from the Evidence-Based Cancer Control Programs website (formerly RTIPS) is a searchable database of evidence-based cancer control programs that provides program planners and public health practitioners easy and immediate access to: 1) programs tested in a research study, 2) publication(s) of the study findings, and 3) program materials used with a particular study population in a specific setting.
Skin Cancer Concerns in People of Color: Risk Factors and Prevention	This article raises awareness regarding skin cancers in people of color by providing recommendations to clinicians and the general public for early detection and preventive measures.
Skin Cancer Foundation	This organization empowers people to take a proactive approach to daily sun protection by offering educational resources on prevention, skin care information, risk factors, early detection, and treatment.
Skin Cancer in People of Color Photo Gallery	This resource shows photographs of different pigmented areas on people of color to help individuals and patients recognize moles, atypical moles, and melanomas.
Skin Cancer Prevention Progress Report 2019 (PDF)	The CDC's fifth annual progress report provides the latest national data on skin cancer, highlights successes, and identifies areas for improvement.

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