




MAY
2003

UConn House Call

REMARKABLE CARE THROUGH RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

SAVING THE SKIN YOU'RE IN



Summer is right around the corner. But before you head outdoors to enjoy the warm weather, UConn Health Center dermatologists remind you to protect your skin from the damaging effects of the sun. Limit your time in the sun, especially from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., when the sun's rays are strongest. Remember to put on sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher, and re-apply often. And, wearing a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses with ultraviolet (UV) protection and light-colored clothing also can help deflect the sun's rays.

Protecting your skin from the sun is key to lowering your chances of developing skin cancer, the most common of all cancers. Basal cell carcinoma accounts for about 75 percent of all skin cancers. Squamous cell carcinoma accounts for 20 percent of skin cancers. The remainder is made up of less common types, including melanoma. Basal and squamous cell carcinoma usually develop on sun-exposed areas of the skin.

A TREATMENT YOU CAN TRUST

Most basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas can be treated with minor surgery, and there are several types of surgery available. The type of treatment chosen depends on the type and size of the cancer and where it is found on the body.

A highly specialized technique, called *Mohs surgery*, available in only a few locations in the state, is offered at the UConn Health Center. Of the treatments for skin cancer, Mohs surgery is proving to be the most effective. "It offers the highest cure rate," says Timothy K. Chartier, M.D., a board-certified dermatologist with the UConn Health Center. "In addition, scarring is minimized and healthy skin in the cancer area is preserved."

THE MOHS ADVANTAGE

"Mohs surgery is the preferred treatment for cancers with a high risk for recurrence and cancers that have recurred following previous treatment," says James D. Whalen, M.D., a board-certified dermatologist at the UConn Health Center. "In addition, it is used to treat cancers that are located in areas where preserving healthy skin is important for functional or cosmetic reasons."

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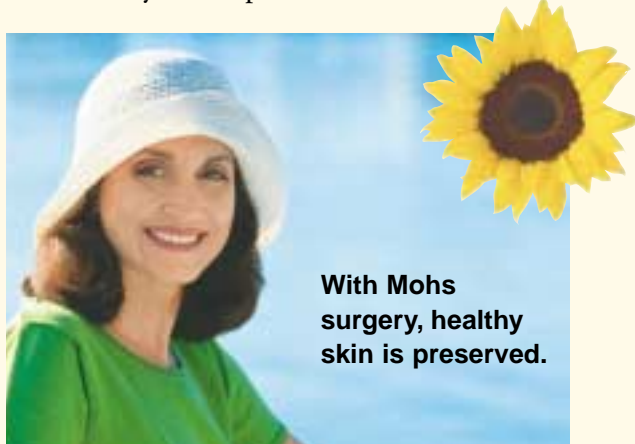
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Remarkable Care Through
Research and Education

It also is used to treat cancers that are large or not clearly defined. Skin cancer can be deceptively large, with extensive roots beyond the visible portion of the tumor. "The roots may extend into areas you can't easily detect," says Dr. Whalen. "With traditional methods, it is more difficult to excise the cancer accurately." The Mohs technique ensures that all diseased tissue is removed.

"Mohs surgery is most often performed on skin cancers of the head and neck," says Dr. Chartier, "especially those areas involving the nose, eyelids, lips and ears."



With Mohs surgery, healthy skin is preserved.

In the procedure, the visible portion of the tumor is removed, then a layer of skin is removed and divided into sections. "Each section is examined microscopically for evidence of remaining cancer," says Dr. Whalen. If further cancer cells are found, the surgeon will remove another layer of skin in the area where cancer cells remain. This process continues until there is no evidence of remaining cancer cells. The process takes longer than traditional surgery, but it means that normal skin next to the cancer can be saved.

"Mohs surgery is almost always performed as an outpatient procedure," says Dr. Whalen. Local anesthesia is used and most surgeries can be completed in three or fewer stages, requiring less than four hours.

"After the surgery is complete, we consider the reconstructive options," says Dr. Chartier. "Depending on the area and size of the skin affected, options include sutures and skin grafts as well as letting the area heal naturally." Patients return for a follow-up appointment within two weeks of surgery.

Drs. Whalen and Chartier perform over 1,500 Mohs surgeries each year. Both physicians have advanced training and extensive experience in dermatopathology, dermatologic surgery, dermatopathy and Mohs surgery.

Recognition of changes in skin growths or new growths is the best way to detect skin cancer in its earliest stages. Says Dr. Chartier, "That's why it's so important to keep regular appointments with your doctor and perform routine skin exams."

LEARN MORE!

In addition to treating non-melanoma skin cancers, UConn Health Center experts offer comprehensive care for patients with melanoma or a family history of melanoma as well as a full-range of dermatologic services. Patients are seen on the UConn Health Center's main campus in Farmington and at the UConn Health Partner's office in East Hartford (see physician profiles on page 4). Call 800-535-6232 for an appointment or more information.

BREAKING THROUGH BARRIERS

Quit smoking. Exercise. Eat a low-fat, high-fiber diet and maintain a healthy weight. Manage stress. Keep regular doctor appointments and have your blood pressure and cholesterol levels checked. These actions can help you lower your risk for heart disease.

Despite practicing these heart-healthy behaviors, though, some heart patients develop a condition in which previously opened arteries begin to reclose, potentially leading to heart attack and even death.

THE PROBLEM WITH STENTS

Balloon angioplasty is used in approximately 700,000 Americans annually to treat coronary artery disease. Coronary arteries may become blocked or narrowed by a buildup of cholesterol, plaque or other fatty deposits. Angioplasty is a procedure that involves inserting a balloon-like device to open the clogged artery. Then, a stent, which is a small stainless steel mesh tube, is placed in the artery to prevent reclosure, basically propping it open. A successful angioplasty opens the narrowing and improves blood flow through the artery.

Six months after balloon angioplasty followed by stenting, however, a re-narrowing of the artery due to new tissue growth, called *in-stent restenosis*, occurs in 20 to 30 percent of patients. Repeat in-stent restenosis has proven to be very difficult to treat, and according to a report in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, it occurs in 54 to 66 percent of cases even after repeat angioplasty.

A CLEAR SOLUTION

At the UConn Health Center, cardiologists are using a new minimally invasive therapy to prevent in-stent restenosis. The procedure is called *intravascular radiotherapy*.

In the coronary procedure, a patient who has in-stent restenosis undergoes angioplasty. "After the cardiologist has reopened the artery, a carefully controlled dose of radiation is inserted through the catheter to the stent site," explains Michael Azrin, M.D., a cardiologist at the UConn Health Center who performs the procedure. The radiation remains in the stent site for a few minutes, eliminating scar tissue and clearing the artery. After a prescribed amount of exposure, the radiation is withdrawn.



Intravascular radiotherapy is a new procedure used to reopen blocked arteries.

Photos courtesy of Guidant Corporation. Copyright © 2003 Guidant Corporation.

The radiotherapy portion of the procedure is computer controlled and guided. "The advantage of the technology is that you can treat a small amount of tissue precisely and not radiate other areas or organs significantly," says Dr. Azrin.

The radiation decreases scar tissue growth, decreasing the need for repeat angioplasty and open-heart surgery as well as reducing the risk for heart attack. "This is an exciting development in cardiology," said Dr. Azrin. "The technology is proven, the procedure is minimally invasive and effective, and the outcomes are largely favorable."

The equipment the cardiologist uses to administer the radiotherapy is manufactured



The warm weather is here, but your body might not be ready to spring into action—especially if you're not properly conditioned. Before you get physical, say sports medicine experts at the UConn Health Center, consider the parts of your body that might be susceptible to injury:

- **Shoulders.** The shoulder's rotator cuff is used extensively in athletic activities that require repetitive, high-intensity overhead motions, including tennis, swimming, volleyball and golf. "Chronic wear and tear can cause injury to the rotator cuff in the form of tendonitis as well as minor to severe tears," says Augustus D. Mazzocca, M.D., an orthopaedic surgeon at the UConn Health Center.
- **Knees.** Activities that involve jumping and pivoting, such as soccer, volleyball, basketball and tennis, can result in strains and tears of the knee's anterior cruciate ligament (ACL).
- **Elbows.** *Osteochondritis dissecans*, also known as Little League Elbow, is a repetitive motion

injury that is seen in the elbows of throwing athletes, like baseball players. Symptoms include pain and swelling. "You especially need to watch for this type of injury in kids," says Carl Nissen, M.D., an orthopaedic surgeon with the UConn Health Center. "Little League season is short, and kids want to get out there and play—and keep playing. But, if they continue without treatment, which is mainly rest, game-ending injuries can result."

Lateral epicondylitis, or tennis elbow, is most likely to affect golf and tennis players. It is the result of overuse of muscles that have not been adequately conditioned.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Warm up. "Warm up until you break a sweat," says Dr. Mazzocca. "If you do, we'll see a lot fewer injuries this season." A good overall body warm-up is jogging in place. For shoulders, elbows and knees, seek advice from a trainer on strength and flexibility exercises.

Find balance. "Concentrating on one type of activity or sport can lead to activity-related repetitive injuries," says Dr. Mazzocca. "Your workouts should include aerobic exercise, strength training and flexibility exercises."

by Guidant Corp., Santa Clara, Calif. The UConn Health Center's team is the first in the state to use the advanced equipment.

IN THE FUTURE

"Drug-eluting stents, which are pretreated with and release a medicine to prevent restenosis, hold promise for the future," says Bruce T. Liang, M.D., cardiologist and chief of the division of cardiology at the UConn Health Center. "Though the drug-eluting stents are not yet available, together with intravascular therapy, they will provide an effective way to treat the problem of restenosis."

Thanks to the UConn Health Center's state-of-the-art technology, research capabilities and superb staff, Connecticut's citizens can continue to receive remarkable cardiac care.

HOW'S YOUR HEART?

To make an appointment with a UConn physician, call UConnLink at 800-535-6232.



Kids involved in athletic activities can suffer a wide range of injuries.

Concentrate on technique. Improper movement can result in recurrent injuries. "If you're unsure about the correct body positioning needed in your activity, take lessons or consult a trainer," says Dr. Nissen.

Start out slowly. "When increasing your activity, do not add more than 10 percent per week in intensity or duration," says Dr. Nissen. "Rapidly increasing activity may lead to overuse injuries."

Identify injuries early. "Tennis elbow starts slowly with pain on the outside of the elbow," says Dr. Mazzocca. "If you experience this pain, take a break for a few weeks. Rest, ice and nonsteroidal

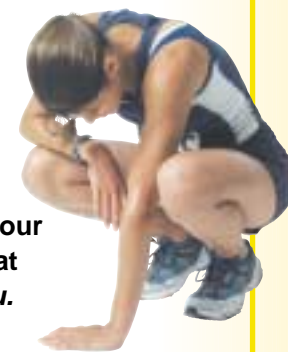


anti-inflammatory medication will help ease pain. If pain persists, see your doctor."

INJURED?

A full range of orthopaedic and sports medicine services, including physical therapy, are available at our Farmington and East Hartford locations.

For more information about these services, or to make an appointment with a specialist, call 800-535-6232. Please visit our sports medicine Web site at uconnsportsmed.uhc.edu.



NEW & NOTEWORTHY

PERSONALIZED FITNESS PLANS

Fitness evaluations and individually designed exercise plans are being offered at the UConn Health Center's Sports Medicine Center. The program consists of an evaluation, personalized exercise program and three-month follow-up appointment with Scott Myrick, certified athletic trainer and certified conditioning and strength trainer. The fee for the program is \$100. Other plans also are available.

PHYSICAL THERAPY SERVICES

Physical therapy is often recommended for patients who sustain injuries or suffer from ongoing physical problems. Physical therapists evaluate patients, identify treatment goals and implement individualized treatment programs. "We help patients reap the benefits of fitness, wellness, injury prevention and exercise," says Erik Kopp, a physical therapist with special expertise in sports medicine. Kopp is now seeing patients in the East Hartford office of UConn Health Partners. Physical therapy services also are available at the Sports Medicine Center in Farmington and the West Hartford office of UConn Health Partners.

For more information on these services or to make an appointment, call 800-535-6232.

THE DISCOVERY SERIES PRESENTS

STRESS AND ANXIETY

Tuesday, May 6

- Stress, anxiety and health
- Separate you from your stress
- When is treatment necessary?

Sponsored by the Security Traders Association of Connecticut Endowment Fund.

HEALTHY AGING

Tuesday, May 27

- Prescription for healthy aging
- Age-related memory changes
- Healthy skin
- Exercise

Programs are always free and open to the public. All programs begin at 7 p.m. and are presented in the UConn Health Center Keller Auditorium. Refreshments are served. *Pre-registration is required as seating is limited.*

To register, call UConnLink at 800-535-6232.

WWW.UCHC.EDU

IT'S JUST ONE MORE WAY THE UCONN HEALTH CENTER
IS HERE FOR YOU

- Are you looking for reliable and current health and physician information? Find it online at www.uchc.edu. Simply click on "Health & Wellness" and here's what you'll find:
- **Choose a Physician.** Find a UConn Health Center physician. "You can find the right doctor in the right place," says Sheryl Rosen, Web Communications Officer at the UConn Health Center. "We make it easy to search by location or specialty."
 - **Clinical Trials.** Learn more about the clinical trials being conducted by distinguished researchers at the UConn Health Center. Trials focus on a variety of diseases and conditions, including alcoholism, breast cancer, chronic bronchitis, colon cancer, depression, hypertension, osteoporosis, prostate cancer, skin cancer, social phobia and more. The area also includes a section of frequently asked questions and includes information on participant eligibility.
 - **Support Groups and Community Programs.** Discover a wide variety of classes, programs and support groups to help you get well and stay healthy.
 - **Personal Stories.** Enjoy excerpts from letters of thanks from UConn Health Center patients, their families and friends. "And, if you have a personal story you would like to share," says Rosen, "simply fill out the online form provided."
 - **Health Resources.** "You can browse an alphabetical list of nationally recognized sources of high quality health information," says Rosen. "We created this area to give visitors easy access to a wide variety of credible, non-commercial Web sites." There are direct links to a variety of helpful sites, including the American Heart Association, National Cancer Institute and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- For all this and a whole lot more, visit www.uchc.edu.

INTRODUCING...

THE UCONN HEALTH CENTER WELCOMES:

Philip Jaffe, M.D., a board-certified gastroenterologist, is skilled in the most advanced techniques used to diagnose and treat patients with a range of gastrointestinal conditions, including reflux disease, peptic ulcer disease, inflammatory bowel disease, liver disease and more.

Dr. Jaffe received his medical degree from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. He completed internal medicine and gastroenterology residency programs at the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center in Tucson.

Dr. Jaffe sees patients on the UConn Health Center's main campus in Farmington.



Philip Jaffe, M.D.

Tanya Ave'Lallemant, M.D., and **Wendy Levinbook, M.D.**, offer comprehensive medical and surgical services in the evaluation and treatment of disorders of the skin, hair and nails as well as cosmetic services. They also offer specialized treatments for melanoma and other skin cancers as well as rare skin conditions. Both physicians have expertise in all facets of general medical, surgical and cosmetic dermatology.

Dr. Ave'Lallemant is a graduate of Boston College and the UConn School of Medicine. She completed both her internship and dermatology residency at Brown University Medical School.

Dr. Levinbook is a graduate of Cornell University and the UConn School of Medicine. She completed an internship at the UConn Health Center in Farmington and a dermatology residency at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in New Hampshire.

Drs. Ave'Lallemant and Levinbook see patients in the East Hartford office of UConn Health Partners at 99 Ash Street.



Tanya Ave'Lallemant, M.D.

Shiela Subramanian, M.D., M.P.H., a specialist in internal medicine, has strong interests in primary and preventive care for patients of all ages, including seniors.

Dr. Subramanian is a graduate of New York Medical College where she earned both a medical degree and a master's degree in public health. She completed her residency and chief residency in internal medicine at Yale University School of Medicine.

Dr. Subramanian sees patients in the West Hartford office of UConn Health Partners at 65 Kane Street.



Wendy Levinbook, M.D.



Shiela Subramanian, M.D.,
M.P.H.

All physicians are accepting new patients.
To make an appointment or for more information,
call 800-535-6232.