



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Study Finds Skin Cancer Rates Higher Among Athletes

ROSEMONT, IL – With skin cancer rates on the increase, most individuals know the importance of applying sunscreen regularly, but in a recent literature study published in the July/August issue of *Sports Health: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, athletes may be even more at risk for developing the deadly disease.

“Studies further confirm that although exposure to the sun or UV light may help maintain vitamin D levels, exposure also results in a higher risk for developing skin cancers. This is especially true of summer and winter outdoor athletes, who are exposed to higher amounts of UV light due to training and competition schedules. Sun protection strategies, including sunscreens and sun protective clothing, may help to reduce this risk for athletes,” said author Wilma Bergfeld, MD, Senior Staff, of the Department of Dermatology at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

The researchers also pointed out that some athletes are at an increased risk of sunburn because of their training schedules and conditions, with obviously those individuals who compete in summer sports being at significantly increased exposure. They noted, for example that during the Tour de Suisse cyclists were exposed to approximately eight times more than the minimal dose of UV needed to cause sunburn.

“Summer athletes are not the only ones in danger of higher skin cancer rates. In winter sports (eg, skiing, snowboarding), higher altitude sun exposure and reflections off the snow and ice, can lead to even greater exposures, especially to the face and hands. One of the studies we sited, noted that skiers without sunscreen at 11,000 feet begin to develop sunburn after only six minutes of UV exposure,” said Bergfeld.

The research also highlighted that coaches and trainers may be at increased risk because of similar exposures.

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