

Health Awareness

Sun Spots On Your Skin May Be A Warning

(NAPSA)—Spending time in the sun can result in more than just fun and games. For instance, many people find that as they age, their skin begins to show the appearance of some pigmentation commonly known as “sun spots.” These “spots” can increase in number as a person ages.

Unfortunately, what many people don't realize is that some of these sun spots may actually be actinic keratosis (AK), a skin condition that affects 58 million Americans and has the potential to progress to squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), the second-most-common skin cancer.

The good news is an education effort is raising awareness about the problem and how to treat it. The campaign website can be found at www.SpotSignsofAK.com.

Too Much Sun Can Be Risky

AKs are rough-textured, dry, scaly patches on the skin that can range in color and vary in size. They are the result of years of cumulative sun damage and most often appear on parts of the body that are most exposed to sunlight, such as the face, scalp, ears, neck, hands and arms.

AKs are most common in older adults who have spent a lot of time in the sun during their lives. However, even routine activities such as walking the dog or grabbing your mail can lead to sun damage. People who develop AKs typically will not develop just one. The condition will present in numerous “spots” or will continue to present intermittently over time.

An Effort to Raise Awareness

Dr. Ellen Marmur—a dermatologist and cosmetic surgeon—is raising awareness about actinic keratosis by promoting the Spot Signs of AK campaign. The cam-



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paign is an initiative developed by DUSA Pharmaceuticals.

Said Dr. Marmur, “Education around melanoma and other skin cancers has been very strong, but actinic keratosis remains relatively unknown.”

Early Detection Is Critical

According to Dr. Marmur, approximately 5–10 percent of AKs develop into squamous cell carcinoma within an average of two years. Since there is no way to know ahead of time which ones will become cancerous, it is very important to seek a dermatologist's care. Frequent skin examinations are the key to early detection and prevention.

The campaign website contains information on the condition and how to find a dermatologist, as well as information on the range of treatment options available.

“People who get AKs typically do not get just one,” said Dr. Marmur. “The years of sun damage affect entire regions of the skin. This is just further reason for adults who think they have AKs to speak with their dermatologist. And if you don't have a dermatologist, find one.”

For more information on AKs or to find a dermatologist, visit www.SpotSignsofAK.com.



Note to Editors: Dr. Ellen Marmur receives financial compensation from DUSA Pharmaceuticals for participation on its Scientific Advisory Board.