

## 14,000!

It may not be a world record, but one Orange County, CA teenager reportedly sent and received more than 14,000 text messages in a month, according to her somewhat stunned father, a writer for the *Orange County Register*. (Fortunately for them, her family had unlimited text messaging as part of their cell phone plan.) The complete bill, available to the family online, was 400 pages long. The father's call to AT&T uncovered the fact that cell phone users in the 13-17 age bracket text more than any other age group. The average according to a Nielsen survey is about 1,700 texts a month. (Can you imagine if this time were spent reading, studying or exercising?)

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## Defying the Odds Against Melanoma

*Baby oil, iodine, a foil visor, and sun—all key ingredients for the perfect summer tan...right?* Let me explain, these were “mandatory” tanning elements of my youth as I sought the ultimate Coppertone tan. (If you recall these secret ingredients, you know it's been a long time...) I believed half-heartedly that when my freckles multiplied and ultimately collided, I would have one masterful, tropical tan. How crazy can one be?

Now, fast forward many years and you may recognize the major issues; they are as easy as ABC! “A” is for aging. My grandmothers would tell me as I baked on the pool recliner that the sun would make me look old. (At that stage of my life, “adults” really didn't know too much!) “B” is for blotches. Some people call these liver spots, “angel kisses” or age spots. No matter what the label, these blotches appear on skin that has been over exposed to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays. “C” is for cancer! Skin cancer has its own labels: basal cell, squamous cell or melanoma. Mine was the “Big M.”

In 2007, I became a statistic...a faceless number. I was one of more than a million new cases of skin cancer diagnosed that year in the United States. I was one of 54,000 melanomas detected, but only one of 27,500 females with invasive melanoma. (If this was a lottery, I could retire from the payoff.)

As Floridians, we count on sunshine to provide warmth, green yards, and a constant flow of tourists to fund our state's revenue. However, as we go from house to car, classroom to office, or frolic in the sunshine, we can also count on damaging ultraviolet (UV) rays. That is why it is very important for each of us to be vigilant to protect ourselves from the sun.

Our number one protection is sunscreen with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 15; I prefer SPF 35 or 50! Apply this every morning after your shower to all the areas that are exposed to the sun. If you sweat during the day, reapply sunscreen every one to two hours.

Your next best protection is clothing and other accessories. A long sleeved, cotton shirt with a collar can shield you from the sun. Keep your collar up to guard your neck—one of the first areas that “ages quickly” due to sun damage. Wear a wide-brimmed hat to protect your face and ears. Basal and squamous cell cancers are quick to appear on these areas due to constant sun exposure. Next, don't forget your sunglasses that are designed to protect against UVA and UVB rays. (Note that some of the most fashionable sunglasses do not defend you in the battle of the rays.)

The American Cancer Society (ACS) has designated **May 4<sup>th</sup> as Melanoma Monday**. On this day, everyone is encouraged to complete a skin cancer self-exam. Take note of all the spots on your body from moles to freckles to age spots; make sure you or your spouse or friend checks your back. You are looking for the *ABCDEs of Melanoma*. (See next page for instructions.) If you have any spots that are questionable, visit the Lakeland Regional Cancer Center mobile (see schedule on back page) at a school close to you for a comprehensive skin exam by a cancer specialist...or visit your doctor.

I defied the odds and found my melanoma through a monthly skin self-exam. Because of early detection, I did not require chemotherapy and my survival rate is 99 percent. Through early detection...I will live!

## ABCDEs of Melanoma

Recognizing changes in the skin is the best way to detect early melanoma. They most frequently appear on the upper back, torso, lower legs, head and neck. In females 15-29 years old, the torso is the most common location for developing melanoma, which may be due to high-risk tanning behaviors. If you have a changing mole, a new mole, or a mole that is different, see a dermatologist as soon as possible.

If you notice a mole on your skin, you should follow the simple ABCDE rule, which outlines the warning signs of melanoma:

- **A** stands for **ASYMMETRY**; one half unlike the other half.
- **B** stands for **BORDER**; irregular, scalloped or poorly defined border.
- **C** stands for **COLOR**; varied from one area to another; shades of tan and brown, black; sometimes white, red or blue.
- **D** stands for **DIAMETER**; while melanomas are usually greater than 6mm (the size of a pencil eraser) when diagnosed, they can be smaller.
- **E** stands for **EVOLVING**; a mole or skin lesion that looks different from the rest or is changing in size, shape, or color.

The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) urges everyone to examine their skin regularly. This means looking over your entire body including your back, your scalp, the soles of your feet, between your toes and the palms of your hands. If there are any changes in the size, color, shape or texture of a mole, the development of a new mole, or any other unusual changes in the skin, see your dermatologist as soon as possible.

## Is There a Safe Tan?

NO, there is no safe way to tan. A tan is the skin's response to injury caused by UV exposure. Tanning occurs when ultraviolet rays penetrate the epidermis, the skin's outer layer, causing the production of melanin as a response to the injury. Chronic exposure to ultraviolet light, both natural and artificial, results in a change in the skin's texture, causing wrinkling and age spots. Thus, tanning to improve appearance is ultimately self-defeating. Every time you tan, you damage your skin and this damage accumulates over time. This accumulated damage, in addition to accelerating the aging process, also increases your risk for all types of skin cancer.

In spite of claims that tanning beds offer "safe" tanning, indoor tanning equipment, which includes all artificial light sources such as beds, lamps, bulbs, booths, etc., emits UVA and UVB radiation. The amount of the radiation produced during indoor tanning is similar to the sun and in some cases may be stronger.

## Be Sun Smart <sup>SM</sup>

Sun exposure is the most preventable risk factor for all skin cancers, including melanoma. You can have fun in the sun and decrease your risk of skin cancer. Here's how to **Be Sun Smart**<sup>SM</sup>:



☼ **Generously apply a water-resistant sunscreen** with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15 that provides broad-spectrum protection from both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays to all exposed skin. Re-apply every two hours, even on cloudy days, and after swimming or sweating. Look for the AAD SEAL OF RECOGNITION<sup>TM</sup> on products that meet these criteria.

☼ **Wear protective clothing**, such as a long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, when possible.

☼ **Seek shade** when appropriate, remembering that the sun's rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Protect children from sun exposure by playing in the shade, using protective clothing and applying sunscreen.

☼ **Use extra caution near water, snow and sand** as they reflect the damaging rays of the sun, which can increase your chance of sunburn.

☼ **Get vitamin D safely** through a healthy diet that may include vitamin supplements. Don't *seek* the sun.

☼ **Avoid tanning beds.** Ultraviolet light from the sun and tanning beds can cause skin cancer and wrinkling. If you want to look like you've been in the sun, consider using a sunless self-tanning product, but continue to use sunscreen with it.

☼ **Check your birthday suit on your birthday.** If you notice anything changing, growing or bleeding on your skin, see a dermatologist. Skin cancer is very treatable when caught early.

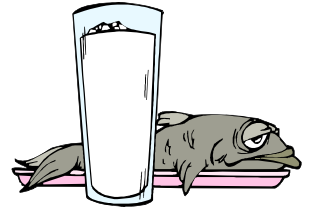
## Vitamin D: Are you D-ficient?

Many Americans are missing out on vitamin D, so much that the deficiency in this country is being called a silent epidemic. Why are experts so concerned? The health benefits of vitamin D go beyond working with calcium to build strong bones. Emerging science suggests vitamin D may help protect against heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and certain cancers. Some studies even indicate that vitamin D may help strengthen our defenses—warding off the flu and other illnesses. There are even preliminary studies that suggest vitamin D is linked to longevity.

Children, teens and adults up to age 70 need at least 400 International Units (IU) of vitamin D per day, while adults over age 70 need even more, 600 IU per day.

For most of us living in sunny Florida, the sun is one of the easiest ways to get vitamin D. Often called the “sunshine vitamin,” our bodies make vitamin D when exposed to the sun. But sunscreen, while important to use, blocks those beneficial rays and we tend to make little vitamin D.

Since you can't always count on the sun, it's even more important to look to your diet for your D. Milk is the leading source of vitamin D in the diet—providing about 100 IU per cup. The recommended three servings of low fat and fat free milk provide 75% of the daily value of vitamin D—along with eight other essential nutrients, including calcium, potassium and vitamin A, which are often in short supply. Fatty fish such as canned salmon and sardines also contain vitamin D.



**Are you D-prived?** Take the quiz and find out if you are deficient in vitamin D: <http://www.getyourd.com>

## Where do those credit numbers come from?

Your credit rating may not determine your ultimate destiny, but it's pretty important in lots of ways. Just how do those credit agencies like Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion figure your score? A *New York Times* article breaks the numbers down:



- **Payment history.** This is the biggest component, looking at whether you pay your bills on time to any organization that reports information to a credit bureau. This can include

medical bills, parking tickets, even library fines.

- **Outstanding loans.** How much money do you owe the bank or any other creditor? Is it a large percentage of the total loan or credit available? For example, maxing out your credit cards will bring your score down.

- **Credit history.** This component looks at how old your accounts are and how much activity they've seen. Long standing accounts that you've paid off consistently have a more positive impact on your rating.

- **New accounts.** Applying for lots of new credit cards can look as if you're having trouble paying your current bills and can trigger a drop in your numbers.

- **Type of credit.** This accounts for about 10 percent of your score. Agencies look at how well you manage installment debt, like a mortgage, and also revolving debt, like your credit card payments. Paying off the balance regularly is better for your score than just making the minimum payment.

## Informed consent: What to ask your SURGEON

Surgery is almost always a scary prospect to confront. The American Association of Neurological Surgeons offers patients this list of questions they should ask before the day of any surgical procedure:

- **What** surgery are you recommending?
- **Why** do I need it?
- Are there any **alternatives** to this surgery?
- What are the **benefits** of having this surgery?
- What are the **risks**?
- How much **postoperative pain** will there be?
- What might happen **if I choose not** to have this surgery?
- Where can I go for a **second opinion**?
- What is your **experience** with this procedure?
- How much will the surgery **cost**?
- Is there a less expensive **alternative**?
- **Where** will the surgery be performed?
- Is this the **most affordable** surgical center?
- What kind of **anesthesia** will be used?
- Can I **eat or drink** anything the day before and/or the day of my surgery?
- **How long** can I expect to be in the hospital?
- Where should I go **when I arrive** at the hospital, and what should I bring with me?
- How long will it take to **recover**?
- What if I still have pain or still experience symptoms **after surgery**?
- When do I schedule my post-surgery **follow-up** appointment?



## ABCs of Diabetes

The *ABCs of Diabetes* is a proactive course through the Wellness Program that provides educations, screenings, and discounts for diabetes supplies and prescriptions. Here are a few of the benefits ABCs of Diabetes participants enjoy:

### Benefits:

- Free eye and foot exams
- Free lipid, HbA1c, kidney function, and blood pressure screenings—two times each year
- Free Accu-Check glucose monitor

**Save \$400  
per year!**

### Reduced Rx Copayments:

- Generic tier copay \$4 (\$8/mail order\*\*)
- Preferred tier copay \$12.50 (\$31.25/mail order\*\*)
- Non-preferred tier copay \$20 (\$50/mail order\*\*)

\*\*90-day supply

### Education/Lakeland:

- Medical Issues in Diabetes\* 5/07/09
- Nutrition & Exercise\* 5/14/09
- Advanced Diet Planning\* 5/21/09
- Hypertension & Heart Disease\* 5/28/09

Classes will be held in the main building of the Jim Miles Center—Palmetto Rm, 5204 US Highway 98 S, Highland City.

\*All classes start at 4:30 PM, and registration is required. Please email [janet.armitage@polk-fl.net](mailto:janet.armitage@polk-fl.net) or call Janet Armitage, RD, LD/N at 648-3057 for more information.

## Healthy Babies



Are you thinking about having a baby, or are you in your first trimester of pregnancy? If so, you need *Babies & You!*\* This March of Dimes program is offered to all School Board employees at no cost, **plus you will receive \$100 after the birth of your baby!** *Babies & You* is a nine-hour educational program designed to promote healthy pregnancy and prevent birth defects.

**June 18, 2009**

**Mark Wilcox Center 8:30 am — 4:30 pm**

**July 16, 2009**

**Jim Miles Center 8:00 am — 4:00 pm**

*Babies & You*\*, *Healthy Additions*® and free prenatal vitamins are offered at no cost to expectant (or soon-to-be expectant) Polk County School Board employees covered under the Blue Cross/Blue Shield health insurance plan. A \$100 co-pay reimbursement is given after delivery to those completing the requirements for each program (a maximum of \$200 for completing both programs). Free prenatal vitamins require a prescription from your physician.

**Visit [www.polk-fl.net/wellness/babies](http://www.polk-fl.net/wellness/babies)  
Call 648-3057 to register for classes.**

## Cancer Screenings Can SAVE Your Life!



On-site cancer and osteoporosis screenings are provided to you by the Polk County School Board (PCSB) Wellness Program in conjunction with Lakeland Regional Cancer Center (LRCC). This **FREE** benefit is available to all employees who have PCSB Blue Cross/Blue Shield health insurance. For an appointment, please contact the Cancer Screening Coordinator at each location at least two weeks prior to the screening date. There are no age restrictions for cancer and osteoporosis screenings on the LRCC screening bus.

### May 09

- 5/5 WESTWOOD MID
- 5/6 WESTWOOD MID
- 5/7 HAINES CITY SR
- 5/11 HAINES CITY SR
- 5/12 SOUTHWEST EL
- 5/13 WEST AREA ADULT
- 5/18 FT. MEADE MID/SR
- 5/19 FT. MEADE MID/SR
- 5/20 DIXIELAND EL
- 5/21 WINSTON EL
- 5/27 TRAVISS CAREER CTR

### June 09

- 6/8 BARTOW TRANS
- 6/9 BARTOW TRANS
- 6/10 LK WALES TRANS
- 6/11 LAKELAND TRANS
- 6/12 VALLEYVIEW EL
- 6/16 DISTRICT OFFICE
- 6/17 DISTRICT OFFICE
- 6/23 DISTRICT OFFICE
- 6/24 DISTRICT OFFICE
- 6/25 DISTRICT OFFICE

### July 09

- 7/7 L-7 SHOP
- 7/8 L-4 SHOP
- 7/9 L-6 SHOP
- 7/10 WH-5 SHOP
- 7/14 UA-1 SHOP
- 7/15 B-2 & B-4 SHOP
- 7/16 B-3 SHOP
- 7/17 EERS SHOP
- 7/21 LW-9 SHOP
- 7/23 MARK WILCOX CTR
- 7/28 B-1 SHOP
- 7/29 B-1 SHOP

# Get on the Bus!