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Dr. Anthony Perri
Skin Essentials ~
What You Need To Know

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SADLER CLINIC

Dr. Anthony Perri Skin Essentials ~ What You Need To Know

By: Shauna S.M. Bauer



Dr. Perri and his staff

If you sat down to think about the different types of cancer afflicting Americans, your first thoughts may include breast cancer, lung cancer, prostate cancer, pancreatic cancer or colon cancer. While certainly not the only type of cancers diagnosed each year, these seem to garner the most press. Sadly, these cancers are all too relatable; they have afflicted our families, our friends, our celebrities. None of us are safe, it seems, from being touched by cancer either personally or through our friends and family. This is very concerning, especially since there is a more common cancer that we may never really consider.

Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer, with more than 1 million cases of skin cancer diagnosed in the United States every year. It is estimated that one in five Americans will develop a form of skin cancer in their lifetime.

There are three types of skin cancer: melanoma, basal cell cancer, and squamous cell cancer. In this area of the country, it is just as important to have yearly skin cancer screenings as it is to follow the other cancer screening guidelines. Even if you are not prone to skin maladies warranting a trip to the dermatologist, it is advisable to schedule a skin cancer screening with a board certified dermatologist once a year after the age of 20.

Dr. Anthony Perri, MD, a Board Certified Dermatologist who sees patients in The Woodlands, knows about skin cancer all too well.

"My passion for dermatology began after my father was diagnosed with melanoma," he explains.

"Fortunately, the cancer was diagnosed at an early stage and he is doing very well, but I learned at an early age that skin cancers like melanoma could be as serious as lung or breast cancer and early detection can save someone's life."

Raised in Corsicana a couple hours north of Montgomery County, Dr. Perri grew up in a medical family. His father, a urologist, practiced in a multispecialty clinic similar to Sadler Clinic and his mother is a nursing professor at Baylor University in Waco. Dr. Perri conducted all of his medical training in the Houston area at Baylor College of Medicine graduating in the top 10% of his class then at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston where he was Chief Resident of Dermatology where he remains an Assistant Clinical Professor.

"As everyone is at risk for skin cancer since moles in sun protected areas can become melanoma and patients without moles who have a significant amount of sun exposure can develop basal cell cancers and squamous cell cancers, it is a good idea to have a baseline skin exam and then depending on the clinical findings a patient will be recommended for either every 3-6 month skin checks by a dermatologist or will be scheduled for an annual exam," Dr. Perri stated.

"In patients with no sun damage or suspicious moles, they will be placed on an as needed schedule with a warning that if any new skin lesion develops or a current skin lesion changes then to come in immediately. I consider 'change' to be

very important with a skin lesion. If a mole or spot is growing or has changed in any way (color, size, shape, begins bleeding) this must be seen right away."

When Dr. Perri suggests a patient must be seen right away, he means it. With extended hours from 8:00am – 8:00pm and Saturday hours with two clinics, Dr. Perri reserves several openings each day for emergency dermatology visits. His open access policy means if you call in the morning with an emergent need, he will see you that



day; it is his passion as a physician to provide the kind of care he would want for himself or a member of his own family.

"A rash or changing mole should not wait," he states. "Skin conditions are much easier to treat and cause the patient much less anxiety when they are managed in the beginning of their course."

In fact, Dr. Perri has saved many lives in Montgomery County through his passionate and skillful attention to detail by identifying a skin cancer during routine patient visits for other underlying issues.

"On a typical day, I may biopsy 5-10 cancers," he explains. "I have had many experiences where a patient came in for treatment of a rash, and I found a skin cancer incidentally."

For this reason, Dr. Perri remains steadfast on recommending skin exams to all patients. "Skin cancer can take many forms and can occur anywhere on the body and can even occur underneath the nails, so I always recommend a complete skin exam at a patient's first visit and then at least annually by myself or another board certified dermatologist," he explains.

Dr. Perri begins each exam by inquiring about any new or changing skin lesions. Typically, a skin cancer exhibits change either in size, shape, color or it has become symptomatic and is bleeding or itching. He inspects these changing moles or lesions first with a dermatoscope, which is a hand held device that allows Dr. Perri to inspect the lesion's architectural pattern by examining just below the skin surface. Once he has examined all of the lesions worrisome to the patient, a systematic scan of the entire skin is conducted, beginning with the hands. Nails are closely examined as melanoma can occur in the nail matrix and toenails are not exempt from skin cancer either; melanoma can occur on the feet even though these are sun protected areas. Skin cancer can even appear between the toes.

Dr. Perri notes that 90% of all skin cancers occur on the face due to sun exposure so this area is closely examined. "The nose and ears are the most common places on the face for skin cancer as they get a direct assault from the sun's UV rays," he says. "Typically, the ears are not covered with baseball caps and many patients forget to use sunscreen on their ears. Although the scalp is covered with hair in most patients, skin cancer can be found here as well. Many of my patients have been referred to my office by their hairdressers/barbers who have detected a skin cancer while cutting their hair and saved their lives."

For those who may not wish to visit a dermatologist to obtain a skin screening, Dr. Perri insists that self screenings at home are crucial for your health.

"I recommend a patient and their partner (husband/wife) examines each other's skin very closely and forms a mental image of what is currently present. This should be done on a monthly basis. If any new skin lesion occurs or a pre-existing lesion changes, an appointment

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Kendra Pratt



Dr. Perri and his staff

should be made immediately with a board certified dermatologist to assess this lesion," he advises. "Early detection is the key to increased survival, decreased morbidity and a better cosmetic outcome when removing skin cancer."

Skin problems are common for people of all ages. Whether you suffer with a rash, itchy skin, skin fungus or infection, skin bumps, or skin tags, there's good treatment available for a variety of skin diseases. If you have oily or dry skin, talk to your doctor about your particular skin condition and learn the best methods to clean, treat, and protect your skin.

Dr. Anthony Perri, MD, is a Board Certified Dermatologist and treats patients age 12 and up. Visit his website at www.conrodermatology.com for more information and to read his daily blogs where he discusses various dermatology issues ranging in topic from rashes to acne, cysts, warts, dry scalp, cancer and more.

Call or visit www.conrodermatology.com today and make an appointment with Dr. Anthony Perri. A list of accepted health insurance plans can be found on his website along with new patient forms. ♦

Skin Cancer Facts

Skin cancer is the uncontrolled growth of abnormal skin cells. If left unchecked, these cancer cells can spread from the skin into other tissues and organs. There are different types of skin cancer. Basal cell carcinoma is the most common. Melanoma is less common, but more dangerous.

Symptoms

Skin cancers may have many different appearances. They can be small, shiny, waxy, scaly and rough, firm and red, crusty or bleeding, or have other features. Therefore, anything suspicious should be looked at by a physician. See the articles on specific skin cancers for more information.

Here are some features to look for:

- **Asymmetry:** one half of the abnormal skin area is different than the other half
- **Borders:** irregular borders
- **Color:** varies from one area to another with shades of tan, brown, or black (sometimes white, red, blue)
- **Diameter:** usually (but not always) larger than 6 mm in size (diameter of a pencil eraser)
- **Any skin growth that bleeds or will not heal**

Use a mirror or have someone help you look on your back, shoulders, and other hard-to-see areas.

Causes

The outer layer of skin, the epidermis, is made up of different types of cells. Skin cancers are classified by the types of epidermal cells involved:

- Basal cell carcinoma develops from abnormal growth of the cells in the lowest layer of the epidermis and is the most common type of skin cancer.
- Squamous cell carcinoma involves changes in the squamous cells, found in the middle layer of the epidermis.
- Melanoma occurs in the melanocytes (cells that produce pigment) and is less common than squamous or basal cell carcinoma, but more dangerous. It is the leading cause of death from skin disease.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Known risk factors for skin cancer include the following:

- **Complexion:** Skin cancers are more common in people with light-colored skin, hair, and eyes.
- **Genetics:** Having a family history of melanoma increases the risk of developing this cancer.
- **Age:** Nonmelanoma skin cancers are more common after age 40.
- **Sun exposure and sunburn:** Most skin cancers occur on areas of the skin that are regularly exposed to sunlight or other ultraviolet radiation. This is considered the primary cause of all skin cancers.

Skin cancer can develop in anyone, not only people with these risk factors. Young, healthy people -- even those with dark skin, hair, and eyes -- can develop skin cancer.

Prognosis

The outlook depends on a number of factors, including the type of cancer and how quickly it was diagnosed. Basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma rarely spread to other parts of the body. However, melanoma is more likely to spread. See the specific skin cancer articles for additional information.

Prevention

Minimizing sun exposure is the best way to prevent skin damage, including many types of skin cancer:

- **Protect your skin from the sun when you can -- wear protective clothing such as hats, long-sleeved shirts, long skirts, or pants.**
- **Try to avoid exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun is most intense.**
- **Use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30. Apply sunscreen at least one-half hour before sun exposure, and reapply every 2 hours.**
- **Apply sunscreen during winter months as well.**

When to contact a doctor

Any suspicious mole, sore, or skin growth should be looked at by a physician immediately. You should take seriously any changes in a mole or any sudden growth on the skin.

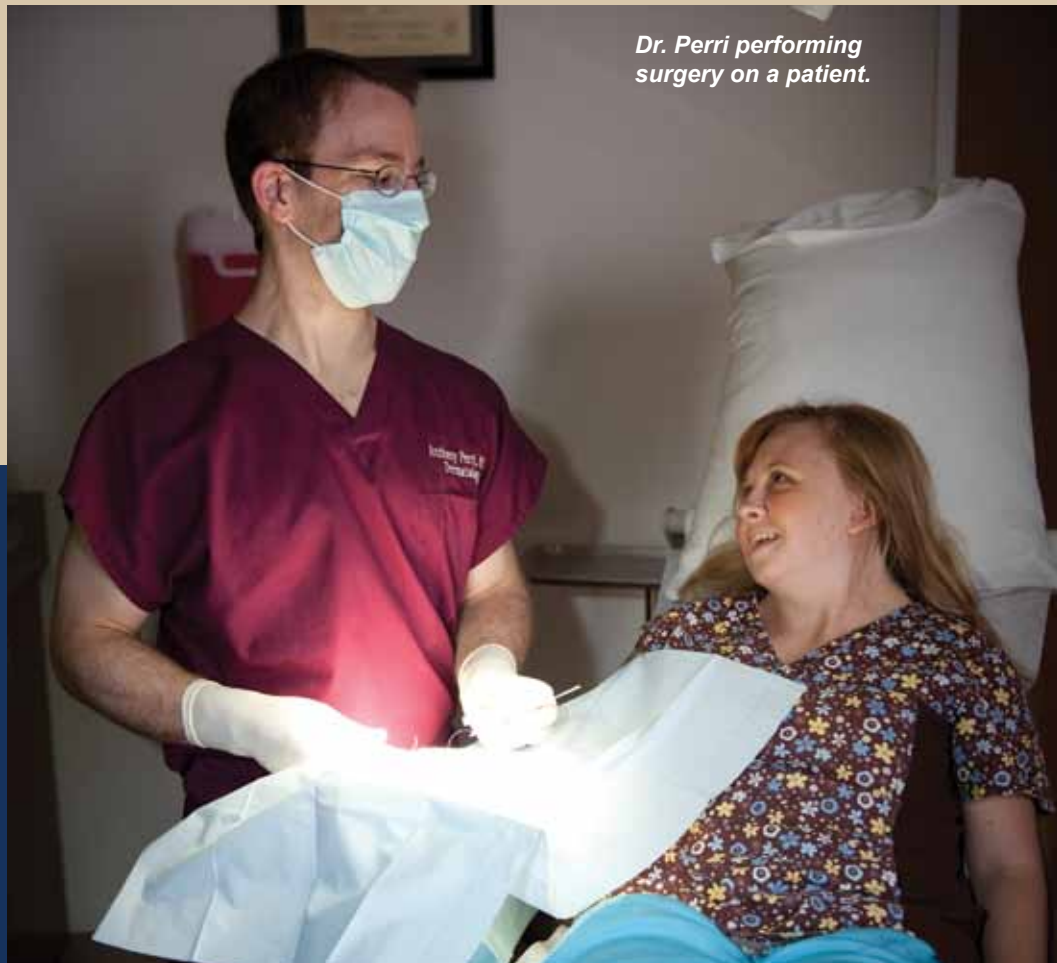
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*“Early detection is
the key to increased
survival, decreased
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cosmetic outcome when
removing skin cancer.”*

— Dr. Anthony Perri, MD

*Dr. Perri performing
surgery on a patient.*



Stage Right