

health+wellbeing

Words of health wisdom – skin cancer

Australia has the highest incident of cancer in the world, but the lower death rate proportionately. This fact is wholly contributed to by the basal cell cancer incidence, making up over 80 per cent of all skin cancers. These are unlikely to produce demise as they do not usually metastasise, but instead invade locally. They are easy to assess and excise. Newer and very effective creams are now available for their removal.

Melanoma, by contrast, is less common (third most common in men and women aged 15 to 44 years of age), but metastasise such that it can produce 2,000 times its primary weight in secondaries throughout the body. The condition is the commonest cause of cancer death in ages 10 through to 40.

The Cancer Council states: "Over 382,000 people are treated for non-melanoma skin cancer and melanoma each year in Australia, and over 1400 die. Every year, doctors remove around 720,000 lesions from the skins of Australians because they are suspected skin cancers."

An easy six-step guide to minimise your potential for skin cancer can include:

1. Slip on a closely woven, long sleeved shirt (natural fibres are coolest).
 2. Slap on broad spectrum, SPF 30+ sunscreen that is water resistant 20 minutes before going outside – and reapply every 2 hours.
 3. Slap on a broad brimmed hat that covers the face, neck and ears. The brim should be 6cm for children and 8-10cm for adults.
 4. Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes. Sunglasses should block out at least 95 per cent of ultraviolet radiation (UVR) and meet the Australian Standard AS 1067.
 5. Seek shade whenever possible – under trees, verandahs or shade cloths.
 6. UVR levels vary throughout the day. They are highest from 10am to 2pm (11am to 3pm during daylight saving). UVR is still present at other times of the day, on cool or cloudy days and during winter.
- For more information, log onto www.sunsmart.com.au and peruse.



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Spotlight on: alcohol and work

During the warmer summer months, the temptation is greater than ever to escape the office at lunchtime for a cold beer.

But UK research by insurer Royal & SunAlliance reveals that around one-quarter of accidents in the workplace are caused by alcohol, and that employers believe alcohol affects both absenteeism and productivity. The research suggests that as many as one in six Britons is under the influence at work.

So how can HR professionals help manage the impact of alcohol on the business? Ben Willmott, employee relations adviser at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, says HR should remind staff of the organisation's alcohol policy so they understand what is defined as acceptable consumption.

"Alcohol testing is only allowed under the *Data Protection Act* for firms where safety is critical to the job and there is a zero tolerance policy to alcohol," he says. "But if an employee is not performing to their usual level, behaving unusually and their breath smells of alcohol, it is reasonable to assume they have been drinking, and action can be taken.

"Line managers can then talk to the employee armed with this evidence," he says.

Howard Lyons, managing director of Alcohol Risk Factor, which provides alcohol awareness information, says employers have a responsibility to demonstrate due diligence.

"It isn't about learning to spot the problem drinker," he says. "It's about employers and employees rethinking the way alcohol interferes with workplace activities, and working together to achieve safer, healthier and more productive environments."

Organisations can be more prone to alcohol problems where a drinking culture exists. However, this is no excuse to turn a blind eye, says Lyons. "Any company with an accepted binge drinking culture needs to consider its position urgently and implement actions to reduce the negative outcomes," he says.

By Kirstie Redford. Courtesy of *Personnel Today* magazine. www.personneltoday.com

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* Cancer Council Australia website

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