



SHE WILL BE MISSED!



After ten years with the Skin Surgery Center, Judy Heunisch is retiring. Known to some of our patients as “human Valium”, we have been fortunate to have such a caring individual on our staff since the practice started in 1997.

Judy’s retirement was precipitated by a skiing accident she had in January when she broke a small bone in her shoulder.

Judy has kindly offered to continue to work for the Skin Surgery Center on a part-time basis filling in for vacationing staff members. We quickly took her up on her offer!

In addition to working on a reading list that is “longer than a lifetime,” Judy plans to spend more time hiking, biking, gardening, and traveling with her husband, Dean. All of these activities will, of course, take second place to spending more time with her grandchildren, Nicolaus, Mitchel, and Chloe and savoring time spent with her 87 year old mother, June.

We wish Judy all of the best and thank her for her many years.

SKIN CANCER SCREENINGS

It is that time of year when we can’t wait to get outside and enjoy the sun. Time in the sun should include sun-screen and sunglasses and you may want to consider participating in one of the skin cancer screenings taking place in our area.. The following are some of the events where free screenings are being done.



Our own Dr. Gorman will be participating in a free screening sponsored by Sun Precautions. The screening will take place at their Madison Park location on June 2nd from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please call the store at 206-322-7057 after May 15th to schedule an appointment if you are interested.

The Third Annual 2007 Safe from the Sun Walk & 5K Run on Sunday, May 6, 2007 will offer free skin cancer screenings. The event will be held at Warren G. Magnuson Park at noon. For more information you can call 1-866-463-6663 or online at www.MelanomaInternational.org.

On Melanoma Monday, May 7, 2007, Overlake Hospital is offering screenings on from 5:30 pm —8:00 pm in the Overlake Hospital Medical Tower. Please call 425.688.5259 to register for an appointment.

We also encourage you to contact your Dermatologist and local hospital.



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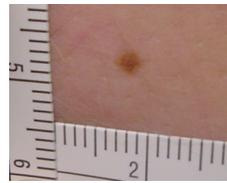
By Sarah Patton, PA-C



In dermatology, we use the term “nevus” for what most people commonly call a mole. The term “nevi” is plural for nevus (moles). Moles are made of cells called melanocytes. Melanocytes are the pigment producing cells that give a mole its dark color. Most moles are a shade of brown. When medical providers examine moles, they look for certain traits that would classify a mole as a normal mole (as discussed below). When nevi or moles appear abnormal, they are often biopsied. After a nevus is biopsied, it is examined under the microscope. If this microscopic examination reveals normal appearing melanocytes it is called a benign nevus. If the melanocytes are abnormal, it is determined to be an atypical or dysplastic nevus.

Normal nevi are typically evenly pigmented (brown or light brown) and symmetric. They are generally less than 6mm in diameter (size of a pencil eraser or less) and have discrete, well-demarcated borders. Normal nevi expand in proportion to

body growth and are often more prominent during pregnancy. We tend to develop nevi after the age of 6 to 12 months. It is normal to grow new moles until around the age of 40. Normal moles may enlarge slightly and increase in number during childhood and adolescence.



Normal Nevus

Dysplastic (abnormal) nevi may be unevenly pigmented, with multiple shades of pink or brown. In addition, another characteristic of a dysplastic nevus may be asymmetry. This means that if you were to draw a line down the middle of a nevus, it should look similar on both sides. If it does not, it is considered asymmetric. A dysplastic nevus may be, dark (e.g. black in color) and have irregular borders. Some dysplastic nevi are large, greater than 6mm in size. Rarely, dysplastic nevi may itch or bleed. It is important to note that a dysplastic nevus does not have to have *all* of these characteristics to be abnormal. For example, a clinician may decide to biopsy a mole because it is very dark in color and larger than the size of a pencil eraser (greater than 6mm) even if it is otherwise symmetric and has regular borders. If a person has

a mole that has one or all of these characteristics, they should have their moles examined by an experienced professional who can best determine the need for a biopsy.



Dysplastic Nevus

Dysplastic nevi are important because they may be an indicator that a patient is at an increased risk for melanoma. Melanoma is the most serious form of the most common skin cancers. Melanoma is caused by a proliferation of abnormal melanocytes. Dysplastic nevi are sometimes called “pre-melanomas”. This means that if a mole is abnormal, it may eventually turn into a melanoma skin cancer. This is why it is important to biopsy moles that appear very atypical. It can sometimes be difficult to tell the difference between a melanoma and an atypical mole. If this can't be determined, a mole should be biopsied. Individuals who have many dysplastic nevi are at an increased risk of developing a melanoma. It is important to detect melanoma at an early stage, when the prognosis is very good.

The best way to avoid developing

a dysplastic nevus is to take the same precautions that we recommend to decrease your chances of skin cancer. This includes:

1. Avoiding exposure to sunlight during peak times (between 10AM and 4 PM daily)
2. Wearing a daily moisturizer with SPF 30 or higher on sun exposed areas (e.g. face, neck, hands).
3. Applying a waterproof, broad spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher to any sun exposed areas if your exposure exceeds 10 minutes. This includes wearing a lip balm with sunscreen. It is important to reapply sunscreen every 90-120 minutes if you are perspiring or swimming.
4. Wearing sun protective clothing (can be found in many outdoor stores), including wide brimmed hats.
5. AVOID tanning beds. There have been many studies that correlate tanning bed use with higher rates of dysplastic nevi, melanoma and other skin cancers.

Some people are genetically predisposed to dysplastic nevi, but they can decrease their risk of developing melanoma by following the above recommendations. If you have any moles that you think may be abnormal, please make an appointment in a timely fashion with your medical provider for the evaluation of these moles.

DID YOU KNOW?

Sarah Patton, PA-C does skin exams in the Seattle office on Fridays. She is in the Bellevue office on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and then in Seattle on Friday.



SKIN SURGERY CENTER
SKIN CANCER SPECIALISTS

Seattle

1229 Madison, Suite 1480

Seattle, WA 98104

P 206.346.6647

F 206.346.6022

Bellevue

1551 116th Avenue NE

Bellevue, WA 98004

P 425.453.8647

F 425.455.5727

www.skisurgerycenter.com



Dr. Peter B. Odland



Dr. Annalisa K. Gorman