

Don't scoff at year round skin care



Megan Archer

I just came from a dermatologist appointment where I was told as a redhead with pale skin, I am 50 times more likely to develop a melanoma. I haven't been able to verify that exact statistic, but whatever the actual number is, it's far too high for my peace of mind.

Statistically speaking, you probably aren't a redhead, but that doesn't mean you should disregard skin care. Skin cancer is the most commonly diagnosed type of cancer, and more than 3.5 million cases are diagnosed every year in the United States, according to the American Cancer Society. It's important to be aware if you are at risk for skin cancer and to take steps to catch any problems early.

It might seem like this is a strange time of year to publish an article about skin care — sunburns seem like a summer issue. Yes, wearing revealing clothing and spending time enjoying the nice weather can lead to some nasty sunburns, but sun damage can occur year-round. Growing up in the Colorado mountains where snow sports are extremely popular, I quickly learned going skiing without sunscreen was a terrible idea. The strength of UV rays can double when reflected off snow, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. There's never a wrong season to be thinking about preventative skin care.

I made my dermatology appointment because I was concerned after several relatives had to get suspicious moles removed. But beyond family history — which is a risk factor — there were many other reasons why I was concerned. As I've mentioned before, I have red hair, pale skin, freckles and moles. I sunburn easily. I've lived most of my life more than a mile above sea level, and UV levels increase with increased altitude, according to the World Health Organization.

Despite these risk factors, I was hesitant to go to my appointment. I thought it might be an unpleasant experience for several reasons — a stranger was not only going to look at all my skin but might also end up cutting some off it off. After that appointment, I can announce both of those things happened, but neither was as bad as I had imagined. The doctor was professional and comforting, and the local anesthesia worked wonders — I couldn't even tell someone had scraped some skin off my face. Besides, the relief of knowing nothing was wrong was well worth any discomfort I initially felt.

At the end of my examination, I was told they needed to take a sample of one small mole on my temple for a biopsy, but other than that, I was fine. This almost surprised me, considering the doctors projected I would be at such a high risk. But, of course, this doesn't mean I am free forever — I was given a pamphlet instructing me how to perform self-checks for suspicious moles and what signs to look for.

If, like me, you have a lot of risk factors associated with skin cancer, I urge you to schedule a dermatology appointment and get checked out. Hopefully you'll never have to deal with skin cancer, but if you do, you'll be very thankful you caught it early.

Megan Archer is a senior computer science major from Morrison, Colo.

How to protect yourself from skin cancer

When outdoors:

- Use a broad spectrum sunscreen that protects against UVA and UVB rays. Make sure it's at least SPF 30.
- Remember to reapply your sunscreen at least every two hours while in the sun.
- Cover up when in the sun, or at least try to stay in the shade between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Don't use tanning beds or lamps.

Source: cancer.org/research/infographicgallery/skin-cancer-prevention

Good peer editing can save your paper



Holly Fisher

With midterms finally coming to a close, many of the students here at Truman State have become well acquainted with the process of writing papers. They've cranked out however many pages of text their professors required, submitted their final draft, crossed their fingers and hoped for the best. However, professors occasionally require an extra step to this process — peer editing. Students often see this dreaded requirement as an unhelpful waste of time, but that doesn't have to be the case. Peer editing can be incredibly helpful and is important to academic success.

Most of the time, when a student receives their peer edited paper, they see a sheet marked with a few grammar corrections and little else. Those corrections might be helpful for professors who are sticklers for grammar, but they actually do very little to improve the quality of a paper. Students might also receive vague comments such as, "This is bad" or "This doesn't work," and a writer cannot hope to fix something when they don't know what the actual problem is.

These kinds of edits are pretty useless. They are surface-level corrections, can be unbelievably frustrating and are not representative of good peer editing. In contrast, proper peer editing is incredibly useful, addresses the overall topic of a paper and acknowledges whether or not the points are written in a clear and cohesive manner. This is big-picture editing — it explains why parts of a paper might be awkward and can solve glaring problems that simply can't be fixed with minor grammar corrections. This kind of peer editing is far from the waste of time and energy exchanging papers often seems to be, and sometimes it can make a substantial difference.

Peer editing also can be difficult when the editor doesn't legitimately criticize a paper. Too many people are afraid of hurting the writer's feelings with their critiques, and this actually can do more harm than good in the long run. A writer cannot improve if they don't know what they are doing wrong, which is why honesty is key. It's okay to tell a writer they've messed up — this is the entire point of editing. When comments are constructive and explain how something should be done, they are not as disheartening as the editor might think. Peer editors also should point out what the writer has done well. These things are not always as obvious as the mistakes, but a writer can learn and be encouraged just as much from positive comments as they can from critical ones.

People also seem to stray away from the peer editing scene in part because of the criticism. Sometimes an editor might not be very tactful in their criticism, but it is the writer's duty to know how to handle different critiques and comments. Edits,

especially when made by a peer, are not always correct. Our peers are just as fallible as we are, and it's possible they will make mistakes. Ultimately, it is the writer's job to take edits into consideration and then decide whether or not to incorporate them. They do not have to cut 75 percent of their paper just because their peer editor told them to, for example. A writer definitely should take that kind of comment into consideration and use it to make the paper better, but the writer makes the final call.

Lastly, the "peer" in peer editing is important. Someone writing a biological study, for example, should have a peer editor who not only can tell the writer how well the paper is written, but also if the biology in it makes sense. This is true for every discipline. When someone wants to publish a paper they are encouraged, and at times required, to have their work peer edited to ensure accuracy and highlight any holes in the writing. This is the number one way to strengthen any paper or writing project and students should take full advantage of it.

Peer editing is so much more than a tedious task assigned by professors. Routine peer editing can seriously increase grade-point averages, and can even teach people how to become better writers. If peer editing is done properly, it is well worth the extra effort.

Holly Fisher is a senior English and linguistics major from Elizabethtown, Ky.

AROUND THE QUAD

What is your ideal Halloween costume? Why?

A real life Darth Vader costume. It would just be cool.

Josh Daminato
Senior



I don't know. I feel like my ideal costume would be a princess or a mermaid.

Bri Hagstrom
Sophomore



I think it'd be cool to combine all the female superheroes. There would finally be someone to beat Batman.

Kiana Rowan
Senior



Darth Vader because it's fun and you get to have a cool cape. Plus, you get a lightsaber.

Danielle Bode
Freshman

