



Monthly Skin Cancer Screenings at AMH Have Helped Hundreds

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ALTON, IL – It's hard to get something for nothing these days, but a free monthly screening at Alton Memorial Hospital can help you prevent a serious problem.

Dr. Noor Ahmed, a plastic surgeon who has practiced in the Alton area since 1978, offers a free skin cancer screening one Wednesday per month at Alton Memorial's Cancer Care Center, 6 Memorial Drive.

"It's easy to do and it just takes a few minutes," Dr. Ahmed said. "The screenings help me spot something that might need further treatment."

Advance appointments are required, so call 1-800-392-0936 to set up an appointment.

Dr. Noor Ahmed, a plastic surgeon in the Alton area since 1978, examines a patient for skin cancer during one of his monthly screenings at Alton Memorial Hospital's Cancer Care Center.

Dr. Ahmed will examine suspicious areas on the face, hands or other exposed areas. If further examination is required, he will have the patient contact his office for an appointment.

“It’s an important service and we’ve been doing this monthly since 2010,” Dr. Ahmed said. “In that time we’ve seen more than 500 people (540). They appreciate this very much. If you see something suspicious on your skin, make an appointment so we can take a look. We can do up to 40 appointments at each screening.”

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer. People with fair skin, light-colored hair, green or blue eyes, and people who freckle easily are at the greatest risk. Excessive sun exposure, blistering burns before the age of 18 and a family history of melanoma are also risk factors. Most skin cancers appear after age 50, but more and more young adults and even teen-agers are now being diagnosed. Skin cancer can occur anywhere on the body, but it is most common in skin that has been exposed to sunlight.

The two most common types of skin cancers are basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma. Both are slow growing and are easy to treat if found early. The most serious type is melanoma, which can be cured if diagnosed and treated when the tumor is thin and hasn’t deeply invaded the skin. However, if a melanoma is not removed early, it can be very dangerous and cancer cells may spread to other parts of the body.

Dr. Ahmed’s next screening will be from 4:15 to 6:15 p.m. Wednesday, April 11. Advance appointments are required by calling 1-800-392-0936, and the schedule fills quickly each month. But the next screening is only a few weeks away. Other dates the rest of 2012 are May 9, June 13, July 11, Aug. 8, Sept. 12, Oct. 10, Nov. 14 and Dec. 12.

For more information about skin cancer, contact Dr. Ahmed’s office located in Alton Memorial Hospital’s Medical Office Building at 618-465-6401.