Monthly Skin Cancer Screening January 15 at AMH

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If you're concerned about skin cancer, particularly on your hands or face, Alton Memorial Hospital is having a free screening from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 15, in the Medical Office Building C (Cancer Care Center). Advance appointments are required, so call 1-800-392-0936 to set up an appointment.

Participants will be examined by plastic surgeon Dr. Noor Ahmed. He will examine suspicious areas on the face, hands or other exposed areas. 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.