

Surgeon points to warning signs for all ages

Skin cancer rise alert

DOCTORS are warning people to be on their guard as cases of skin cancer continue to increase across Sussex.

An average of two people under 35 a week are diagnosed with the condition in the county and experts warn it is the fastest rising form of cancer.

Medics say it is difficult to pinpoint the reason for the increase but believe it is a combination of sunbed use, too much exposure to sun as a child and failure to take the right precautions.

Consultant plastic surgeon Paul Banwell from the McIndoe Centre in East Grinstead said the number of younger people developing the disease was concerning.

Dr Banwell, who is also head of the melanoma and skin cancer unit at the town's Queen Victoria Hospital, said: "There are different types of skin cancer and it is vital that people are aware of the problems to look out for."

"Warning signs include any moles, lumps and bumps that may change colour or shape or even bleed. The earlier the diagnosis the better and it is vital that people are vigilant."

■ TO stay safe, look out for any changes to moles or freckles such as getting bigger or starting to bleed.

People can avoid the risk of developing the disease by spending time in the shade between 11am and 3pm, covering up with a T-shirt, hat and sunglasses and using a high factor sun cream.

For more information, visit www.cancerresearchuk.org.

by **SIOBHAN RYAN**

siobhan.ryan@theargus.co.uk

"Some are more vulnerable than others, such as those who are fair-skinned, but it can affect people for different reasons."

"Some may have developed cancer because of getting sunburned or using sunbeds too much while others may be those who work outside or spend a lot of holidays abroad."

Karen and Stephen Portch, from Shoreham, have both been treated for skin cancer at the same time.

Mrs Portch, 39, was a sun lover throughout her teens. She would go to the beach in the UK and abroad and not wear sun cream as she was only on holiday for a week and wanted maximum tanning opportunities.

Since then she has had seven cancerous lumps or moles removed that have changed in colour, shape or texture.

She said: "My attitude to the sun has changed. These days I stay out of the sun, don't use sunbeds and get my tanned look from bronzer. I would warn people to be extra careful and vigilant as this can affect people at any age."

Mr Portch, 52, is the opposite of Karen and tries to stay out of the sun whenever possible.

He was astonished when Karen spotted the pink lump on the back of his neck and from her past experiences knew it was something to be looked at.

He is now very aware and always wears hats outside and at least a factor 30 sun cream every day.

PICTURE: LIZ FINLAYSON

LF27011286



TREATED: Stephen and Karen Portch have both suffered from skin cancer