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## Skin cancer survivor tells teens "it's cool to be pale"

03:13 PM Mountain Standard Time on Wednesday, July 20, 2005

By 3TV

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Kim Clark is known in Chandler as a soccer star, but now she's in the spotlight for something else, her melanoma.

It's not the title anyone wants: youngest person in Arizona with skin cancer. But Kim hopes her story will make other teens think twice before going out into the sun.

Whether she's playing soccer or in the pool, Kim doesn't look like other Valley kids. She has to wear **more** clothes when she's outside.

"I've learned to wear shirts in the pool and wear hats and sunglasses when I'm outside," she said.

Last summer doctors diagnosed Kim with melanoma. At the time, she was the youngest person in Arizona to have the potentially deadly cancer.

"Our world sort of fell apart because we weren't expecting melanoma at 13 years of age," Kim's mom, Karen Clark, said.

"It's changed me mentally and physically because now I have scars on my body," Kim said.

Those scars are a constant reminder of the severity of her skin cancer.

"They know this was a brush with a serious condition," said Dr. Ronald Hansen, chief of pediatric dermatology at Phoenix Children's Hospital.

Hansen credits Kim's mother for noticing a suspicious mole.

"Kim's mother saved her life by pointing out that mole," Hansen said. "Had she waited five years, it would have been too late."

"They have to go so far millimeters thick to remove the melanoma



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**Kim Clark demonstrates the right way to apply sunscreen.**

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and make sure they did get it," Clark said.

Doctors were able to remove all of Kim's cancer, but the surgery left an impressive scar.

These days Kim not only covers up, she applies sunscreen the "right" way.

"An hour before, you put a layer of sunscreen on," Kim said. "You leave it coated white on your arms and legs and face and then you let it soak in. And then when you get to your destination, you put another layer on, but you rub it in.

"With sunscreens, you're supposed to leave a thick residue, a sticky residue," she explained. "That means you're going to take an ounce to cover your body -- a lot of it."

Kim is also spreading her knowledge with other teens as a spokeskid for the SHADE Foundation of America, the Curt and Shonda Schilling Melanoma Foundation.

Kim knows all too well it's hard to get through to teens.

"They want to be like, it's cool to have a suntan," Kim said. "But I think it's cool to be pale."

Clark says Kim has grown up a lot in the last year. She's now more careful when outside, but most importantly, she knows her passion for sports and life in general doesn't have to end.

"Your life can't stop, it just sort of begins over and you have to take precautions to go forward," Clark said.

Kim will continue to have melanoma checkups for the next five years as a precaution. While she's gotten more moles removed, none have been cancerous.

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