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**This Valentine’s Day - You could save a life!**

**and it may be the one you love the most…..**

Let’s be honest, there are just some places on your body you can’t see for yourself. That’s why this Valentine’s Day, the Australian Melanoma Research Foundation (AMRF) is encouraging partners to check each other for spots or unusual freckles that could be melanoma.

“Melanoma is referred to as Australia’s national cancer - along with New Zealand, Australia has the highest incidence rate in the world,” said Ms. Marisa Chilcott, CEO AMRF. “Melanoma can be deadly, but the good news is that more than 90% of melanoma can be successfully treated if detected early. So, finding a spot and getting it checked out by a professional early can literally save a life.”

“Many melanomas are found on the back, neck, scalp and behind your ears,” Ms. Chilcott said. “That’s why we think Valentine’s Day is the perfect time for partners to check each other. To help, we have produced a check sheet that outlines what to look for and where to look.” www.melanomaresearch.com.au

The fact sheet outlines the ABCDE melanoma guidelines.

Asymmetry – one half of the mark does not match the other

Borders – the edges are irregular and ragged

Colour – not the same all over or has changed over time

Diameter – the spot is larger than 6mm or is increasing in size

Evolving – change in shape, size, colour, elevation or itching, bleeding or crusty.

Some places are easy to check,’ said Ms. Chilcott. “But the back of your body, including under the arms, back, neck, buttocks, scalp, ears, lips and nostrils are hard to see for yourself. A study by the American Academy of Dermatology revealed that women are 9 times more likely to notice melanoma on another person, so women can play a vital role in ensuring their partner knows about potentially dangerous spots that need to be checked.”

Melanoma can also appear in unusual places like the palms of your hands or soles of your feet and under finger or toenails. We recently mourned the birthday of Bob Marley who died in 1981 from a rare form of melanoma that occurred under his toenail. It is an important reminder that even people with darker skin are vulnerable and regular skin checks by professional specialists are important.

The Australian Melanoma Research Foundation was founded in 2006 with the mission of supporting awareness, prevention and early identification initiatives and funding research to improve outcomes for patients. Melanoma deaths currently exceeds the road toll and there is hope that with urgent and sustained action, significant breakthroughs could occur in our lifetime.

More Australian melanoma facts and figures:

* Close to one person is diagnosed every 30 mins.
* Roughly two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime.
* Melanoma is the third most common cancer in Australia.
* 1,400 people die from melanoma each year.
* It is the most common cancer in young Australian (aged 15-39 years of age)

Show the person you love - you care about their health - it could be the best gift ever. Download the free fact sheet from AMRF’s website www.melanomaresearch.com.au

Interviews are available by contacting Ms. Marisa Chilcott, CEO AMRF contact 0422345426.

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