



Sunscreen 101

Choosing the right sunscreen:

- Choose "**broad spectrum**" sunscreens to ensure protection against both UVA and UVB rays from the sun.
- The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends sunscreen with a **sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30.**
- If you avoid using sunscreen because it leaves a **white or gray cast** on your skin, find a sunscreen that works for you, as *not all sunscreens cause this effect.*

Sunscreen application:

- Apply 15 minutes before heading outdoors.
- Cover ALL exposed skin, including commonly missed areas, like the neck, ears, top of the head and feet.
- Don't overlook your lips; use a lip balm with SPF 30 or higher.
- Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours when outdoors, or after swimming or sweating.
- Wear sunscreen rain or shine and all year round.

Self-Examination

Regularly checking your skin for early signs of skin cancer is important. Many health-care providers advise a **monthly self-examination using a full-length mirror** to identify any unusual spots on your body. If you find anything concerning be sure to notify your doctor.

More specifically, people of color should check for:

- ✦ Dark spots/growths
- ✦ Sores that won't heal (or reappear)
- ✦ Rough dry patches
- ✦ Dark lines on or near the fingernails or toenails
- ✦ Moles changing in color, size, or shape

The American Academy of Dermatology Association (AAD) provides some great tips in identifying early warning signs of melanoma using the acronym "ABCDE".

- ✦ **Asymmetry:** One part looks different than the other
- ✦ **Border:** Uneven borders
- ✦ **Color:** Different colors
- ✦ **Diameter:** Large diameter
- ✦ **Evolving:** Changing in size, shape or color

Visit AAD for more info:



Image source: <http://healthnbodytips.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/abcde-of-melanoma.jpg?b0bc0c>

SUN SAFETY FOR ALL SHADES

Skin Cancer Prevention for People of Color



Sun Smart in Suffolk SUN SAFETY IS FOR EVERYONE

Edward P. Romaine
County Executive



Gregson H. Pigott, MD, MPH
Commissioner of
Health Services

For more information and references visit:



**The Suffolk County
Cancer Prevention
& Health Promotion
Coalition**



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SUN

SAFETY

People of Color “refers to diverse skin colors and includes people of African, Asian, Latino, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and Native American descent”.¹

True or False

People of color can get skin cancer.

TRUE: People of all skin colors are at risk of developing skin cancer.

People of color have melanin, so they don't need sunscreen.

FALSE: While those with darker skin have more melanin, it does not provide enough protection against skin cancer. Therefore, everyone should use sunscreen.

The only way to get Vitamin D is by being in the sun.

FALSE: While the sun does offer some Vitamin D, UV exposure can be harmful. The best source of Vitamin D is a balanced diet. Fatty fish like tuna and salmon are naturally rich in Vitamin D. Other foods are fortified like cereal, cow's milk, plant-based milk, etc.

What is Skin Cancer?

Skin cancer occurs when skin cells grow in a rapid and uncontrolled way.

How Common is Skin Cancer?

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the U.S., affecting 1 in 5 people in their lifetime. People of color have much lower melanoma rates but are often diagnosed at later, less treatable stages, leading to worse outcomes.

Black individuals have a 70% five-year melanoma survival rate vs 94% in Whites.

1. American Academy of Dermatology Association [AAD] (2023). *Skin Cancer in People of Color*.

What Causes Skin Cancer?

Excessive ultraviolet (UV) ray exposure, from both the sun and indoor tanning, is the primary cause of skin cancer and can lead to damage years before cancer forms.

What Are the Risk Factors?

Certain characteristics and behaviors, such as age, genetics, skin type, having unusual moles and tanning can increase one's risk of skin cancer. In Black people, certain skin conditions (i.e., scars, albinism, and vitiligo) may also increase risk.

Common Types of Skin Cancer

Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC) is the most common skin cancer in Latinx, Chinese and Japanese people. BCC may appear as slightly elevated sores, red patches, shiny bumps, or scars.



Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) is the most common skin cancer among African Americans. SCC may look like red bump or sore that has a hard scaly texture.



Melanoma is rare but the deadliest skin cancer. Melanoma can appear as a dark spot with an irregular border. In people of color, 60%-75% of melanomas develop in non-sun-exposed areas (i.e., palms of hands, mouth, nails, genitalia, and soles of the feet).



Image source: American Academy of Dermatology. (2023). Types of Skin Cancer.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

SUN SAFETY = SKIN CANCER PREVENTION

1. Avoid Direct Sunlight and Seek Shade

Avoid direct sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when UV rays are strongest. Seek shade near trees or buildings and limit unprotected sun exposure to a few minutes.



2. Wear Protective Clothing

Examples: Wide-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts, sunglasses, and long pants or skirts. Clothes made from tightly woven fabric offer the best protection.

3. Avoid Indoor & Outdoor Tanning

Tanning significantly raises the risk of skin cancer. Tanned skin indicates damage and is not healthy.

4. Examine Your Body (Monthly)

Checking your skin regularly can help detect early signs of skin cancer. Take pictures of any existing moles, marks, or pimples so you can notice when changes occur.

5. Wear Sunscreen (All Year-Round)

Even if you never sunburn, you can still get skin cancer. Wearing sunscreen is one of the best and easiest ways to protect your skin from sun damage. Sunscreen should be applied every time you will be outside, even on cloudy days.

TIP: Keep your sunscreen near your toothbrush or makeup to ensure you remember to apply it before leaving your home.

