

feel better

Safe in the sun



There is no such thing as a healthy tan, according to dermatologists, who look at a tan and see a sign of injury. Tanned skin will forever contain cells whose genetic structures have been permanently damaged by the sun.

Some facts:

- Sunburns can actually affect your immune system and interfere with your skin's ability to repair itself.
- The more sun exposure – and damage you do to your skin – the less ability it has to heal. The result is mottling and age spots – and even melanoma, the most deadly form of skin cancer.
- The sun's rays also damage your skin's DNA, leading directly to wrinkles and sagging skin.
- Indoor tanning is dangerous.

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, indoor tanning before the age of 35 has been associated with a significant increase in the risk of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. Yet, over a million Americans, 70 percent of whom are girls and women, ages 16 to 29 years old, visit a tanning salon daily.

Despite these facts, a study by the American Academy of Dermatology revealed these attitudes toward tanning among teens:

- 63% of teens believe they look better when they have a tan
- 59% of teens believe that people in general look healthier with a tan
- 43% of teens say they lie out in the sun
- 28% of female teens and 14% of male teens say they never use sun block
- Only three in ten teens who lie out in the sun say they always use sun block

In the past, the ozone layer in the atmosphere provided a blanket of protection from the sun's damaging rays. The ozone layer in the atmosphere has been thinning over the past several years due to air pollution. As a result, the sun's damaging rays can reach earth more easily and there has been an increase in the incidence of skin cancers.

Indoor Tanning

For more information on sun safety and the dangers of indoor tanning, please visit the American Academy of Dermatology at <http://www.aad.org/public/index.html>



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Know your numbers:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Weather Service (NWS) have developed an Ultraviolet (UV) Index to describe the day's likely levels of exposure to UV rays. You may be able to find the UV Index on television, in the newspaper, and online. The Index predicts UV level using a 0-10+ scale as follows:

While you should always protect your skin, take special care to adopt safe-guards when the UV Index predicts exposure levels of moderate or higher.

Ultraviolet Index UV Index Number	Exposure Level
0 to 2	Minimal
3 to 4	Low
5 to 6	Moderate
7 to 9	High
10+	Very high

What you can do:

- Avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are strongest
- If you have to be outside wear protective clothing; and to use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher.
- Sunscreens with SPF numbers higher than 15 may work well for people who have lightly pigmented skin, live at high altitudes, or work or play outdoors much of the day. To get the most protection from your sunscreen, apply it liberally at least 30 minutes before going outside and remember to re-apply it after swimming or perspiring heavily.
- Protection from UV rays is important all year round. UV rays can be as strong on cloudy, hazy days as well as on bright, sunny ones.
- Follow this simple rule about sun exposure: "Short Shadow-Seek Shade." The intensity of UV rays is directly related to the angle of the sun or altitude above the horizon. When a person's shadow is shorter than the person is tall, the intensity of the UV rays from the sun is more likely to cause sunburn.
- The best protective clothes are loose fitting garments made from fabric that is tightly woven. Darker colors may offer more protection than light-colored clothing, and dry clothes provide better protection than wet ones. A wide-brimmed hat that offers a lot of shade is the best choice for protecting head, face and neck.

