

MELANOMA MYTH *vs* FACT



I don't have to worry about melanoma; it's rare.

Actually, melanoma cases have doubled in the last thirty years, and over 90,000 new cases of invasive melanoma will be diagnosed in the United States this year. It's one of the most frequently occurring cancers in young adults ages 20 to 30.

It's "just" skin cancer.

Melanoma **IS** a form of skin cancer—the most deadly form. Found early, the five-year survival rate is around 99%. Found late, after it has spread to other parts of the body, the five-year survival rate drops to a frightening 15%-20%.

I need to tan for vitamin D.

The National Institute of Health recommends that we focus on getting our vitamin D from food, supplements, or brief daily exposure to the sun.

A tanning device is a safe way to get a tan.

False! The amount of radiation produced during indoor tanning may emit UV radiation up to 15 times the strength of the midday sun. Those who begin tanning before the age of 35 increase their melanoma risk by 59%, and the risk increases with each use. Women younger than 30 are 6 times more likely to develop melanoma if they tan indoors.

A "base tan" protects the skin from sunburn.

A tan means the skin has already sustained DNA damage and it's trying to protect itself from further damage by producing melanin. There is no such thing as a safe or healthy tan.

I wear SPF 30 broad-spectrum and water-resistant sunscreen, so I'm protected.

Your protection is related to how well and often you put on sunscreen. A shot-glass-sized amount is needed to cover a body. Sunscreen protection usually lasts 40-80 minutes, which means that reapplying is just as critical as the initial application. Finally, sweating, swimming, and towel drying all can diminish its effectiveness.

People with darker skin don't develop melanoma.

While melanoma is more common in those with lighter skin tones, people of all skin colors, including African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians, can develop melanoma.

get the facts

Founded in 2004, AIM at Melanoma is the largest international melanoma foundation seeking the cure for melanoma.

www.AIMatMelanoma.org

