



Winter is over and the long awaited summer is just around the corner, which comes with fun in the sun. Time to get outside the house and office and lay out in the sun by the pool, swim, go to the lake and just spend time enjoying the great outdoors. But wait, before that we need a baseline tan. We can't start the summer white as a ghost. Oh yeah, there is the tanning bed a great way to get a tan, or is it? Even though you may enjoy spending time in a tanning bed or in the sun outside, we need to pay close attention to our skin and what the sun and UV rays are doing to it. We get so excited we forget our skin needs protection. We forget to put on sunscreen and if we do remember, we are caught up with what we are doing and forgot to reapply the sunscreen.



End result, a bad sunburn. No big deal, right? Wrong. Over time, the exposure to sun can take a toll on our skin and we don't see it happening until it is too late. That too late point is:



Melanoma

Unfortunately, we do not have a shell for protection like the tortoise. We have to rely on clothes, sunscreen or staying out of the sun, but it is summer. Clothes are great when it is cold, however, when it is hot who wants to wear a lot of fabric on a hot summer day.



On cloudy days we are fooled by the fact the sun doesn't feel as hot. We forget the rays, which burn our skin, still come through the clouds. Therefore, some of the worst burns happen on cloudy days because people have a false sense of security and forget about the sun's rays.



Not only do sunburns look funny, they **HURT**. They can cause blisters, permanent scars and cancer. The ultraviolet (UV) radiation is a proven human carcinogen and we get this from the sun as well as tanning beds. The Skin Cancer Foundation reports the following facts about skin cancer:

- 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer in the course of a lifetime
- 1 person dies of melanoma every hour
- Nearly 50% of Americans who live to age 65 will have skin cancer at least once
- Your risk of developing melanoma doubles if you have had more than five sunburns
- Regular daily use of SPF 15 or higher sunscreen reduces risk of melanoma by 50%
- People who first use a tanning bed before age 35 increase their risk for melanoma by 75%



The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends the following to protect your skin:

1. Seek the shade, especially between 10AM and 4 PM.
2. Do not burn.
3. Avoid sun tanning and UV tanning booths.
4. Cover up with clothing, including a broad-brimmed hat and UV-blocking sunglasses.
5. Use a broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher every day. For extended outdoor activity, use a water resistant, broad spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher.
6. Apply 1 ounce (2 tablespoons) of sunscreen to your entire body 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply every 2 hours or immediately after swimming or excessive sweating.
7. Keep newborns out of the sun. Sunscreen should be used on babies over the age of six months.
8. Examine your skin head to toe every month.
9. See your physician every year for a professional skin exam.



If you have to have a tan, consider a spray tan, the benefits of a tan without the sun and harmful UV rays.

Before you go out any day of the year, please put on sunscreen. The cost of the sunscreen and the time it takes to apply will be well worth it in the end! Ask anyone who is fighting melanoma and you will hear "they wish they had taken the time to put it on".

