

Ten Myths and Facts about Melanoma and Skin Cancer

The month of May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month and Monday May 1st is Melanoma Monday. Melanoma is the least common, but most deadly skin cancer. Melanoma incidence rates have been rising for at least 30 years. It is the 5th most common cancer in men and the 7th most common cancer in women. Here are common misconceptions about melanoma and skin cancer:

Myth: People with dark skin color don't get melanoma.

Fact: People with lighter skin and eye color are at higher risk, but anyone can get melanoma.

Myth: Melanoma is only a concern for middle age and older adults.

Fact: Melanoma is also a concern for young adults and even teenagers. Melanoma is the most common cancer among people 25-29 years old.

Myth: Sun protection is only needed during sunny days.

Fact: Many factors expose you to the harmful UV rays that can cause melanoma and other skin cancers. You also need protection during cloudy and snowy days.

Myth: Tanning beds are a safer alternative to sunbathing.

Fact: Research shows tanning beds increase a person's risk for getting melanoma.

Myth: Melanoma is easily treated and removed from the skin.

Fact: Melanoma is easily treated if caught early, but it can spread to the liver, brain, bone, and gastrointestinal tract if detected when it's in advanced stages.

Myth: Sunscreen is the only form of protection needed to prevent melanoma and skin cancer.

Fact: A broad-brimmed hat and UV-blocking sunglasses are also necessary.

Myth: A base tan protects the skin from getting burned and prevents melanoma from forming.

Fact: A change in your natural skin color is a sign of skin damage. There is no such thing as a healthy tan.

Myth: Makeup with sunscreen offers suitable protection against melanoma and skin cancer.

Fact: The sunscreen in make-up does not provide the recommended amount of coverage so sorry, additional sunscreen is needed.

Myth: Moles aren't cancerous and aren't likely to cause melanoma.

Fact: Having a lot of moles or moles that have irregular features can increase your melanoma risk.

Myth: It's too expensive to get screened for skin cancer.

Fact: You can start at home by checking yourself for suspicious moles, for no cost. There are also many free skin cancer screenings especially in May. Find a free screening near you: <https://www.aad.org/public/spot-skin-cancer/programs/screenings>

Resources: <https://dfwnavigators.nursingnetwork.com/nursing-news/73061-may-cancer-awareness>