

Tanning is Out: Myths and Facts

Myth: Having a tan is healthy.

Fact: No, it's not. When your skin color changes, it's damaged and that can lead to premature aging and skin cancer.

Myth: I look better with a tan.

Fact: Tanned skin is damaged skin, and tanning can lead to premature aging, wrinkles, and skin cancer.

Myth: Indoor tanning provides the same/safer UV light as sunlight.

Fact: There is no safe way to get a tan. Some tanning beds can expose people up to 5 times more radiation than the sun

Myth: Tanning salons are a healthy way to get your vitamin D.

Fact: It's true that Vitamin D is needed for healthy bones and muscles, and may reduce the risks of some types of cancer, but tanning beds are not a safe way to get your vitamin D. It is safer to get it from the sun, supplements and your diet.

It is possible that just a few minutes a day of unprotected sun exposure is enough, but this depends on your age, skin color and UV Index. In the fall and winter, the Canadian Cancer Society recommends that, adults living in Canada should consider taking Vitamin D supplementation of 1,000 international units (IU) a day.

Myth: Tanning in moderation does not cause cancer; only sunburns can cause cancer.

Fact: Burning is only one risk factor for developing skin cancers. Exposure to UV radiation without burning is also responsible for DNA damage, thereby increasing a person's cancer risk.

Myth: Sun damage is only temporary. If you rest your skin between sun exposures, the sun damage is erased.

Fact: Sun damage adds up over time. The skin can repair superficial damage like the redness and soreness of sunburn, but the underlying damage remains. It may take 10 to 30 years for cancer to develop from repeated exposure.

Myth: The sun can't hurt you if it's cloudy or foggy.

Fact: Clouds and fog don't offer complete protection from sun exposure. Up to 80% of the sun's rays can penetrate light clouds, mist and fog.

**TANNING
IS OUT**



Myth: A high SPF sunscreen is all you need to protect yourself from the sun.

Fact: Sunscreen on its own doesn't offer complete protection from sun damage. Sunscreen is not as effective at reducing your exposure to the sun's rays as seeking shade or wearing protective clothing.

Myth: Getting a base tan protects me from the sun.

Fact: Think again! A tan offers almost no protection from sunlight or burning. Some tanning beds can expose you to 5 times more radiation than the sun. Getting a tan from a tanning bed doesn't protect you from the sun – it does more harm than the sun. Use sunscreen to protect yourself instead.

Myth: People with dark skin can't get too much sun.

Fact: While people with light colored skin are at a greater risk for developing melanoma, people with dark skin also increase their cancer risk by being exposed to the sun and indoor tanning beds. People with dark skin should practice sun sense at all times.

Fact: You should wear sun screen in the winter.

Skiers and boarders be aware, up to 50% of the sun's rays can bounce back off snow, especially at higher mountain elevations where there's less atmosphere to protect you. Meaning those red chapped cheeks could actually be sun burnt.

**TANNING
IS OUT**



Canadian
Cancer
Society

BRITISH COLUMBIA AND YUKON