

SKIN CANCER

Myths & Facts

FOR SKIN OF COLOR

Myth: The sun doesn't damage skin of color

FACT: It's true that darker skin has more protection from the sun because it contains higher levels of the pigment called melanin, but skin of color can still be damaged by the sun's UV radiation. For example, UV exposure causes wrinkling, discoloration, and premature aging in skin of color—and **UV exposure increases your risk of skin cancer, no matter the color of your skin.**

Myth: People with darker skin don't need sunscreen

FACT: UV exposure can damage skin of all colors, and sunscreen is one way to protect yourself. **The key is to find a sunscreen that suits your skin type and personal preferences**, ensuring you're comfortable using it to protect your skin. Explore different formulas to find the one that works best for you. Clear and tinted sunscreens are good options for darker skin tones.

Myth: People with skin of color don't get skin cancer

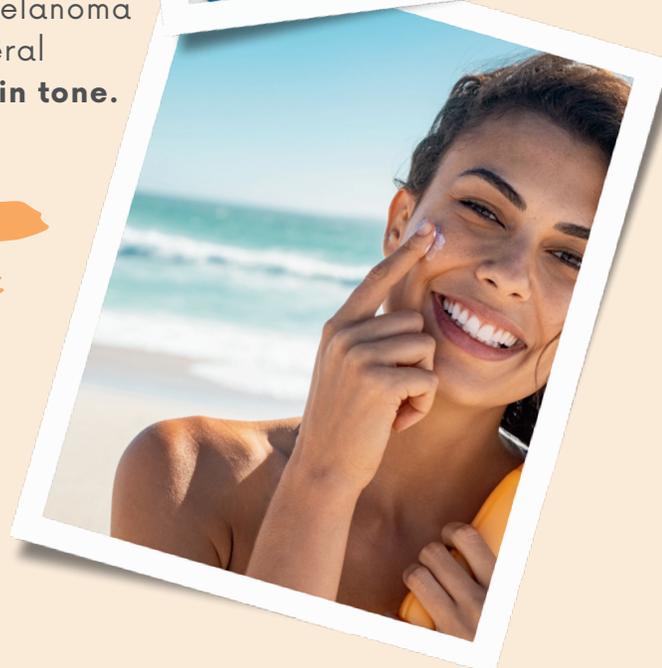
FACT: Skin cancer is less prevalent in people with dark complexions, but it does occur. In fact, the incidence of melanoma among Hispanics/Latinos has risen by 20% in the last several decades. **Skin cancer affects everyone, regardless of skin tone.**

Reviewed by the Skin of Color Society

Everyone benefits from a yearly skin check-up. The earlier skin cancer is detected, the better the outcome.



AIM
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KNOW THE **WARNING SIGNS** OF SKIN CANCER IN **SKIN OF COLOR**

Melanoma

- New or existing moles or lesions that are asymmetrical, have an irregular border, are more than one color, are larger than a pencil eraser, or have changed in any way
- A dark, rapidly spreading patch on the skin

Acral Melanoma

- An irregularly shaped growth with unusual color or an elevated, thickened patch on the palms of hands or soles of the feet; a streak under a nail

Mucosal Melanoma

- A dark-colored lesion in the mouth, nose, or genital areas

Basal Cell Carcinoma and Squamous Cell Carcinoma

- A bump, patch, sore, or growth that unexplainably itches, bleeds, oozes, crusts, or doesn't seem to heal
- A rough or dry patch of skin that doesn't seem to heal



Melanoma can develop anywhere on your skin—from scalp to toes. Melanoma has multiple subtypes, but people with skin of color should be particularly aware of **acral melanoma** and **mucosal melanoma**.

Basal cell carcinoma is the most common type of skin cancer in those of Asian and Hispanic descent, while **squamous cell carcinoma** is the most common skin cancer in Black individuals. Like melanoma, these cancers can develop anywhere on your skin.

Misconceptions About Skin Cancer in Skin of Color—and Why it Matters

Because skin cancer is less common in people of color, **there is often a lack of community awareness** of the disease—including how to prevent it and what to look for on your skin. Additionally, there is **a misconception that melanoma only occurs in sun-exposed areas**. Finally, the medical community may lack suspicion or awareness of how skin cancer presents in skin of color. All of these circumstances lead to skin cancer being diagnosed in people with skin of color **at a more advanced stage**, when it is harder to treat, more disfiguring, and more deadly.

Check Your Skin

- Examine your skin monthly for the above warning signs. Check everywhere — your neck, scalp, legs, groin, buttocks, feet, hands, toenails, and fingernails. Look inside your mouth and nose.
- If you notice anything new, unusual, or changing on your skin, contact a dermatologist.
- If possible, find a dermatologist who has experience treating people with skin of color, so they have more experience identifying skin cancers in people with skin of color.

