



## **MYTH OR FACT? TEST YOUR MELANOMA KNOWLEDGE!**

### **Melanoma is rare.**

THIS IS A MYTH: For those born this year, 1 in 50 will develop melanoma over their lifetime.

### **Don't worry about melanoma; it is "just" skin cancer.**

THIS IS A MYTH: Melanoma takes the life of one person every hour.

### **There is no effective treatment for late stage melanoma.**

THIS IS A FACT: Early diagnosis of melanoma results in an 80% cure rate; therapies for later stage melanoma have varied results.

### **Slather on sunscreen lotion and you'll be safe in the sun.**

THIS IS A MYTH: Sunscreen lotion needs to be used in conjunction with avoiding the prime solar hours of 10am - 4pm, seeking shade, and wearing protective clothing including a hat and sunglasses. Always apply sunscreen lotion frequently and heavily to exposed areas.

### **The amount of sunscreen you apply does not matter.**

THIS IS A MYTH: You should apply one ounce to cover your entire body. This is equivalent to a shotglass or an adult hand size full.

### **Patients often find their own melanomas.**

THIS IS A FACT: You and I find our melanomas most often and women are the champion spotters. That is why skin self-examination should be performed regularly, in addition to an annual screening by your dermatologist.

### **Sunburn in childhood can add up to melanoma in adulthood**

THIS IS A FACT: Less than one third of children are properly protected from the sun and 80% are sunburned at least once each summer. Sunburn increases the risk of melanoma.

### **Melanoma does not occur in individuals with dark skin**

THIS IS A MYTH: Melanoma can develop in skin of any color and in unexposed areas.

### **One out of three teens use tanning parlors.**

THIS IS A FACT: True, and this may be the reason the rate of melanoma is rapidly rising in young women, and is the most common cancer in women age 20-29. Studies have shown the use of tanning parlors to be associated with increased melanoma incidence

### **Tanning beds are "artificial" sunlight, so they are a safe source of vitamin D.**

THIS IS A MYTH: In fact, tanning beds do not provide vitamin D. Ultraviolet B light, which is required for the production of this vitamin, is not emitted by these artificial light sources.

### **Exposure to sunlight is the only way to get sufficient amounts of vitamin D.**

THIS IS A MYTH: The healthiest way to get adequate levels of vitamin D is by mouth. Vitamin D supplements, vitamin D rich foods, and fortified juice or milk allow you to get the "D" benefits without increasing skin cancer risk.

*Courtesy of: DuPont Guerry, IV, M.D., Director, Melanoma Program, UPENN and Catherine M. Poole, President of the Melanoma International Foundation*

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Women's Dermatologic Society [www.womensderm.org](http://www.womensderm.org)*