

It may be time to learn more about your **treatment options**

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## Skincare Advice Doctors Wish You'd Follow

Heed these expert tips to maintain a healthy, youthful complexion

By **Madonna Behen** Posted April 16, 2010 from **Woman's Day** May 1 2010

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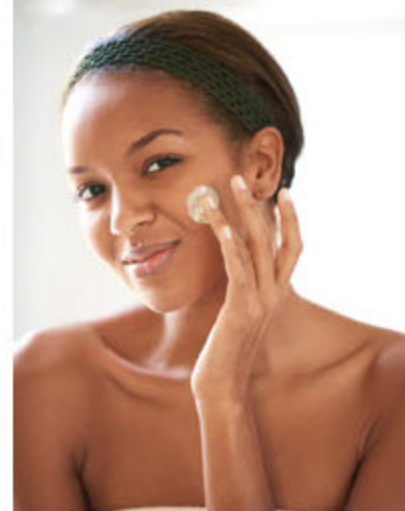
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Warm weather's here and you know the drill: Wear sunscreen and a hat, and seek shade. Even though we're reminded of these "rules" again and again, experts say we're not following them—or we're making big mistakes.

a sign that damage is taking place," says Elizabeth Tanzi, MD, assistant professor of dermatology at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. Make sure you're taking good care of your skin by following these finer points of skin cancer prevention.

### 1. Use Sunscreen the Right Way

For sunscreen to do its job, you need to use the right amount and reapply often. Adults should slather on about an ounce of sunscreen (the amount in a shot glass) and repeat at least every 2 hours, "but studies show that the average person uses about a third of that and doesn't reapply nearly as often as she should," says Anthony Peterson, MD, assistant professor of medicine and director of dermatology at Loyola University Chicago.



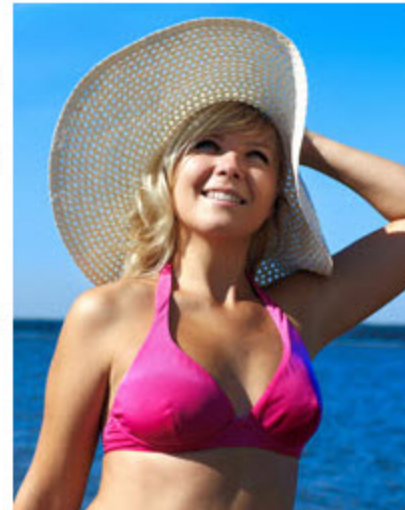
If you have sunscreen left over from last summer, you're probably not using enough. Be sure not to skimp on cancer-prone spots like the tips of the ears, back of the neck and tops of the feet—especially if flip-flops and sandals are your go-to summer shoes.

And don't think that if you're dark-complexioned or African-American you don't have to worry. A recent University of Michigan study revealed that 63 percent of African-American adults never use sunscreen and only 31 percent protect themselves from the sun in at least one way, such as wearing a hat. "Patients are always surprised when I tell them that Bob Marley died of skin cancer," says Brooke Jackson, MD, founder and medical director of the Skin Wellness Center of Chicago.

Although melanoma is more prevalent in Caucasians, studies show that African-Americans have a much lower survival rate, probably because they get diagnosed too late, says Dr. Jackson.

### 2. Be Choosy About a Hat

This is just as crucial as sunscreen. Wear a wide-brimmed hat that completely covers your face and neck. "A baseball cap offers very little sun protection," says Dr. Peterson. "It basically covers just the forehead and maybe a little of the nose, but that leaves the ears, the back of the neck, the sides of the face and the tip of the nose exposed," he says. And all those body parts, especially the nose and ears, are where skin cancers frequently appear, he points out.



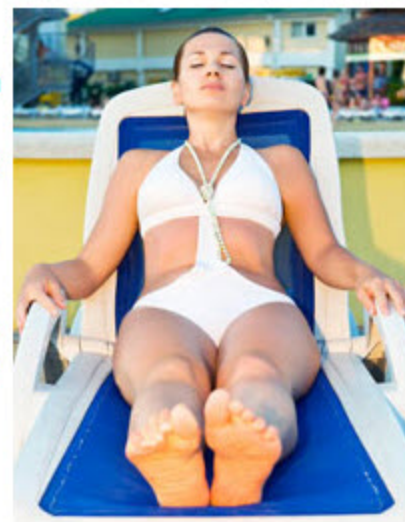
### 3. Stay in the Shade—Especially Between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

That's when the sun's rays are strongest. If that's not realistic (say you're outside for an all-day event like a baseball game or day at the beach), be vigilant about reapplying sunscreen every 2 hours. Also consider sun-protective clothing with a high SPF from companies such as Coolibar and Sun Precautions, which get high marks from dermatologists. "I particularly like those surf shirts for kids that protect their shoulders and neck," says Dr. Peterson. "They're a great way to improve the protection that kids are getting from sunscreen."



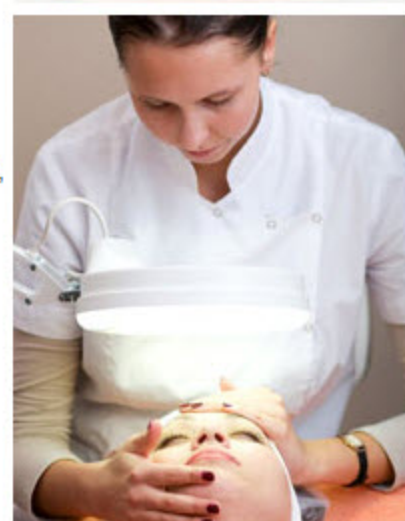
### 4. Fake, Don't Bake—and Forget the Tanning Beds!

The only safe tan is the one you get from a bottle. "When your skin tans, that's a sign that it's being damaged and is trying to protect itself," says Dr. Tanzi. And don't be fooled by those "safer than the sun" signs you see at the tanning salon, says Dr. Peterson. Even though tanning bed lamps emit primarily UVA radiation rather than the sunburncausing UVB rays, UVA radiation is also known to cause skin cancer. "Tanning beds are actually worse than the sun, because you can go in for just 10 minutes and end up with a really bad burn," he says.



### 5. Get Yearly Skin Checks by a Dermatologist

A cursory head-to-toe once-over by your general practitioner just doesn't cut it, especially if you have a family history of skin cancer or lots of moles and freckles. "Not to discredit primary-care doctors, but specialists exist for a reason. As dermatologists, we're trained to spot skin changes earlier," says Dr. Jackson. To find a board-certified dermatologist, visit [aad.org](http://aad.org).



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