

# We know that the sun causes deadly skin cancer, so why are we still tanning?

*The Canadian Dermatology Association has launched a TikTok challenge aimed at a younger demographic to raise awareness of sun safety.*

by **Maja Begovic**

May 16 2022



With increased awareness about the harmful effects of [ultraviolet radiation](#) , some people have become smarter about sun protection, while others continue to ignore the [extensive research](#) linking tanning to skin cancer.

According to the [Canadian Dermatology Association \(CDA\)](#) , tanning has grown in popularity among the younger demographic, and more than 70 per cent of people who use tanning beds are between the ages of 16 to 29. This cohort appears to be most at risk for developing [melanoma](#) — the deadliest form of skin cancer — later in life, whereas [non-melanoma skin cancer](#) can be successfully treated if caught early.

“A tan has commonly been construed as sexy,” says Falyn Katz, executive director of [Melanoma Canada](#) . “The term ‘a healthy glow’ is often used, but there is no healthy tan. Don’t tan. It’s that simple. It could save your life.”

As part of its national sun awareness campaign in May, the CDA is sharing information and resources on behaviours that can help reduce skin cancer risk. With its *Tell Me You’re Sun Smart Without Telling Me You’re Sun Smart* TikTok [challenge](#) , the association is hoping to reach the younger demographic and raise awareness about sun smart habits.

Dr. Benjamin Barankin, Toronto dermatologist and medical director of [Toronto Dermatology Centre](#) says that tanning not only leads to premature aging, but it may also worsen pre-existing health conditions.

“The sun has immediate dangers such as a painful or blistering sunburn, but beyond that, it can dry out the skin, worsen [melasma](#) , [rosacea](#) and [lupus](#) , and may evoke cold sores,” he says. “The sun also has longer term dangers, namely pre-cancers and skin cancers.”

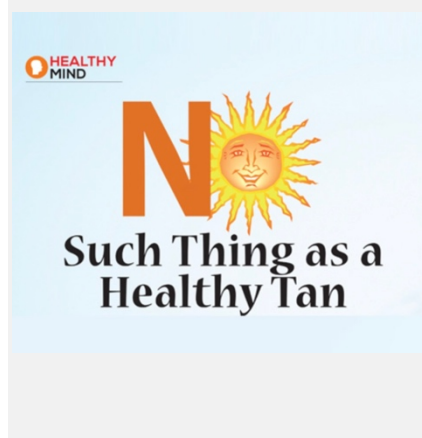
Barankin says the best way to protect the skin is to use a high-quality broad-spectrum sunscreen or sunblock, find one for the body and one for the face, and reapply it every two to three hours, after showering or swimming. Minimizing exposure to sun from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. can also help, along with wearing broad-brimmed hats, high-quality sunglasses, and sun-protective clothing. Monthly skin self-checks are important, but any new or existing moles or lesions that change in shape should be assessed by a dermatologist. In 2022, the [Canadian Cancer Society](#) estimates that 9,000 people will be diagnosed with melanoma skin cancer, and 1,200 will die from it, numbers that are headed in the wrong direction, says Katz.

“Melanoma is a serious cancer,” she says. “I wish Canadians would wear sunscreen the way they wear seatbelts — every time you go outside, just like every time you get a car.”

*Maja Begovic is a Toronto-based writer.*

© 2022 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized distribution, transmission or republication strictly prohibited.

<https://www.healthing.ca/wellness/skin-health/sun-deadly-skin-cancer-tanning>



What are we to do with this? I have been “brown” every summer of my life since I ran around like a half-naked savage as a boy on the farm. I honestly don’t feel healthy till I am brown. Feeling the sun and keeping that feeling with me makes me believe every day it is possible to feel truly and fully alive on this planet.

People all over this planet have been “tanning” since the first person welcomed the rising sun after a cold dark night. All “races” tan, including Indigenous ones. All races pale without it, except maybe some Nilotic tribes. Scotsman do burn easy; I have witnessed “rednecks” with “mad dogs and Englishmen in the noonday sun” defying sense to prove their especial worthiness to lead and rule.

I guess if I am to slather on sunscreen every two to three hours—only “high quality” mind you—I should think very carefully about driving my truck to make sure I minimize that risk and take it too only as absolutely necessary. Did you know a significant proportion of drivers die from head trauma, broken necks, and internal injury? Those who don’t drive, or ride with others, are drastically less prone. And what can I eat in my fridge? Is my olive oil truly “virgin” enough? Last I checked, I am to not eat red or processed meat, drink whole milk, soft drinks, water in plastic bottles, or alcohol. If I really care about my body and health, I should eat “organic” and nonGMO. Where does this end?

We are ruled by “police” of all kinds, with “creep” into every arena. The “food police” are ready to tell us what we eat is “not good for you.” The “dental police” (exploiting dental plans) tell me to get regular checkups and cleaning, to be very worried about brushing receding my gum lines, and to floss with my WaterPic. The “optometry police” keep reminding me to get that eye exam at least every two years which likely would change my prescription and require a new set of eyeglasses. The “therapy police” tells us to get “professional help.” If I practiced again, it would dictate how I responded to clients with the over-riding guise of “protecting vulnerable people” (key no matter what you do) which instead gets applied typically to protect the public image of psychologists and counsellors maximizing their income “serving the public.” As with the “skin police”, there is always a righteous industry seeking to claim our money to serve its prosperity.

No wonder when a pandemic hits so many refuse to buy in and believe the rhetoric. We get deadened to “science” and prescriptive “authorities advocating for our health, our mental, moral and spiritual welfare.” We end up having to keep the “experts” at bay in every arena, making “unhealthy” choices, which in the confusion can end up being truly bad ones. Efforts like the CDA and CCS are launching here actually do not help, so premised, outrageous as this seems.

As with most “religious types” telling us how to make it to that “heaven” to which they are going, who would want to live with these “health-enlightened” people here if natural selection makes them the inheritors of this planet? TJB