

# SUN MYTHS VS SUN FACTS

Experiencing severe sunburn, particularly in childhood, increases the risk of developing skin cancer in later life, so it's very important to protect yourself and your family from the sun. Here are some of the most common myths and misconceptions to help you keep sun safe.

**X 'I can't get sunburnt in the UK; the UV rays aren't strong enough.'**

Wrong! Always protect your skin even in the UK.

**X 'I can't get sun damage on a cloudy summer day.'**

Even if you can't see any blue sky, a significant amount of UV rays can still get through the clouds, so it's best to apply sunscreen if you're out and about during the summer.

**X 'Using sunscreen alone will protect my skin.'**

No sunscreen offers 100% protection so it should never be used as a substitute for clothing and shade.

**X 'My sunscreen says it's water resistant, so I don't need to reapply regularly.'**

Despite what the packaging promises, swimming, sweating, rubbing, or towelling down means you will end up removing the sunscreen from your body. Always reapply after sporting activity or at least every two hours.

**X 'My skin is only damaged if it turns red.'**

Sunburn and skin peeling is the extreme end of skin damage from UV rays. When the skin 'tans' this is damaging your skin and putting you at risk of skin cancer in the future.

**X 'I can't get sunburnt through windows.'**

Wrong! UVA radiation can penetrate glass. This can be a car window, or even your windows at home. Be sure to protect your skin if you're on long car journeys or spend a lot of time sat by sunny windows.

**X 'SPF25 is half the SPF protection of SPF50.'**

SPF50 does not offer twice the protection as SPF25 even though it offers a higher level of protection, so don't be fooled!

**X 'I have to spend lots of money on sunscreen for it to be effective.'**

This is not the case, if you are willing to shop around you do not have to spend lots of money. Look for a sunscreen with a high SPF and 4 or 5 star UVA rating.

**X 'I can simply use aftersun to repair the damage done by sunburn'**

Aftersun may help to soothe and cool your skin, however, it cannot fix the damage done to the DNA inside your cells.

**X 'Skin cancer only affects older people.'**

Malignant melanoma is one of the most common cancers in young adults (aged 15-34) in the UK.

**X 'I shouldn't use sunscreen as I will become vitamin D deficient.'**

This has not proven to be true from studies. Using SPF 50 will filter out 98% of UVB rays, when used perfectly. So rays will still reach the skin. You can also get vitamin D through diet and supplements if you are concerned.

**X 'A tan is healthy'**

There is no such thing as a healthy tan. If the skin changes colour it shows that damage has been done to cells.

**X 'I use a 'once-a-day' sunscreen, I don't need to reapply'**

Even if a sunscreen states it is once-a-day it should be reapplied regularly. The majority of people do not apply sunscreen correctly and miss parts of the body.

**X 'Sunscreen lasts forever'**

Like most cosmetics, sunscreens have an expiration date. Look for the jar icon on the back of the product to see how long it is effective for once it has been opened. So you know, simply write the date you open the product on the bottle. Remember to store your sunscreen in a cool place and not in direct sunlight.

*Dr Anjali Mahto, Consultant Dermatologist & British Skin Foundation spokesperson.*



**For more information about the British Skin Foundation see [www.britishskinfoundation.org.uk](http://www.britishskinfoundation.org.uk)**

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