

GIVE SUN
DAMAGE
THE MIDDLE
FINGER WITH
A WIDE-BRIM
HAT...AND THE
WISDOM FROM
THIS STORY.

What's Your Skin Cancer IQ?

Okay, so you can probably tell this isn't going to be some breezy little BuzzFeed quiz. But we can promise you this: Answering our nine burning Qs might save your life.

By Rachel Grumman Bender



App Hazard

Early detection of skin cancer is key, but some apps that claim to do that might be doing more harm than good. One study found three out of four apps tested failed to flag 30 percent or more of melanomas, classifying them incorrectly as benign. Instead, download UMSkinCheck to take photos and track your own moles, and share any changes with your doc.

ANYWHERE, USA—AREA WOMAN ANNOYED THAT MAGAZINE IS STILL TELLING HER TO APPLY SPF.

Well, area woman, we'll quit when the statistics stop looking so grim. Skin cancer remains the most common cancer in the U.S., with more than 3.5 million cases diagnosed each year. Rates of melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, have risen by more than 700 percent among women ages 18 to 39 in the past few decades. That percentage is staggering. And unacceptable. But frankly, not that surprising when you consider that research shows nearly 43 percent of us still can't decipher the amount of protection we're getting from a sunscreen label. Now that we've slapped you with the bad news, how about some good? Like all the new ways you can fight back—from smart tech to simple diet tweaks. Take this quiz to spot any knowledge gaps before you step into the sun.

5 The number of moles on your _____ predicts your cancer risk.

- A Arm
- B Face
- C Back

6 Which photo shows how much sunscreen you should use on your face (before rubbing in)?

A



B



C



1 True or false: The higher the SPF, the better.

- True False

2 SPF protects against which kind of rays?

- A UVA
- B UVB
- C Both UVA and UVB

3 Melanoma may be especially dangerous for _____ women.

- A African American
- B Pregnant
- C Both A and B

4 True or false: 80 percent of sun damage in your lifetime happens before age 18.

- True False

7 Which of these eats has been shown to protect against sun damage?

- A Oily fish
- B Green tea
- C Broccoli
- D All of the above

8 Drinking coffee can raise/lower your risk.

- Raise Lower

9 True or false: My SPF lip product is sufficient sunscreen.

- True False

SO...HOW'D YOU DO?

1) False. A higher SPF protects longer, not better. Even then, the difference is minor. SPF 15, 30, and 50 block 93, 97, and 98 percent of rays, respectively. Choose 30, minimum, and reapply every two hours.

2) B. SPF helps block only sunburn-causing UVB rays. To fend off skin-aging UVA and protect against skin cancer, you need a broad-spectrum sunscreen. We like Neutrogena CoolDry Sport Lotion SPF 50 (\$11, at drugstores).

3) C. Pregnant women and new moms are five times more likely to die of malignant melanoma than nonpregnant women, possibly because growing a baby weakens your immune system. African Americans are more likely to develop the disease in certain areas, such as under the nails, where it can progress further before it's spotted. If you're in either group, be doubly sure to get an annual skin check by a dermatologist, and do a monthly self-exam. Moms-to-be: Use a sunscreen with zinc oxide or

titanium dioxide, which is kinder to sensitive skin. Try MD SolarSciences Mineral Moisture Defense SPF 50 (\$39, mdsolarsciences.com).

4) False. About 23 percent of lifetime sun exposure occurs by age 18. In fact, you'll still reach only about 74 percent by your 59th birthday. In other words, no slacking off, even when you retire to Boca.

5) Arm. Having more than 11 moles on your right arm is a sign that you have 100 moles or more on your body. Key info, since the higher your total mole count, the higher your melanoma risk.

6) B. Experts recommend a heaping nickel-size dollop for your mug—and it looks like a lot more than you'd think, right? (There's a reason why derms say to *slather* yourself with the stuff.) Skimp and you won't get the full SPF. Glob it on, then rub in until absorbed.

7) D. Oily fish like salmon are swimming in omega-3s, which help block the nasty effects of

UV radiation. Green tea is packed with antioxidants (which help protect against UV cell damage) and catechins (a chemical shown to reduce tumor cell growth); try sipping two to three cups daily. It's unclear why cruciferous vegetables like broccoli lower the risk, but eat three weekly servings.

8) Lower. A recent study found java may protect against melanoma, and people who drank the most had the greatest benefit. Caffeine may be responsible, but since too much of the chemical can make you jittery, stick to one to two cups a day.

9) Depends. Gloss (even if it has SPF) can draw UV rays to your mouth. Opaque lipsticks containing titanium dioxide have more built-in protection; choose one with a broad-spectrum SPF of at least 30 (rare, so check the label). Our fave: Suntegrity Lip C.P.R. Broad Spectrum SPF 30 (\$28, suntegrityskincare.com).

Bad Math

If you'd burn after 15 minutes, an SPF of 15 would protect you for 225 minutes (15 x 15). But this equation doesn't factor in sweating, swimming, or uneven sunscreen application.



My UV Patch

Our writer tests out the techiest new way to suss sun safety.

Even if your sunscreen game is on point at the beach, it's easy to forget that you soak up plenty of UV rays during everyday activities (like walking from one building to another). Enter La Roche-Posay's new My UV Patch—a stretchable, one-square-inch, heart-shaped sticker that changes color depending on how much UV radiation your skin absorbs, and gives feedback via a companion app. I slapped one on my hand while running errands and driving in my car. I scanned the patch a few times throughout the day and—thanks, daily sunscreen habit!—I stayed in the “no risk” green zone (orange is “moderate risk” and red is “high risk”). Bonus: The patch also served as a handy visual reminder to put sunscreen on my hands, an easy-to-neglect area.

My UV Patch is free at select dermatologists' offices; check laroche-posay.us to find a location near you.

Sources: Deborah Sarnoff, M.D., senior vice president of The Skin Cancer Foundation; Justin Ko, M.D., M.B.A., director and clinic chief of medical dermatology at Stanford Health Care; Bernard Fox, Ph.D., the Harder Family Chair at Providence Cancer Center's Earle A. Childs Research Institute in Portland, Oregon; Thuzar M. Shin, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor of dermatology at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania; Joshua Zeichner, M.D., director of cosmetic and clinical research at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City

High-Tech Treatments

Skin cancer doesn't immediately mean invasive surgery and radiation. Emerging options can also hunt down and eliminate specific types (and are usually covered by insurance).

BASAL CELL CARCINOMA

The most common form of skin cancer—about 2.8 million cases of basal cell carcinoma are diagnosed annually—can show up as red patches, pink growths, open sores, or shiny bumps in areas that get the most sun exposure (e.g., face, shoulders, and scalp). Though it rarely spreads to other areas of the body, the cancer can be fatal if left untreated.

Treatment: Photodynamic therapy (PDT) One study found this treatment KO'd up to 95 percent of basal cell carcinomas. Here's how it works: A light-sensitive drug is applied to the skin, then a light or laser is used to “turn on” the drug, causing it to produce a type of oxygen molecule that's toxic to cancer cells.



SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA

A growth of abnormal cells mainly caused by cumulative UV exposure, these cancers can appear as scaly red patches, raised growths, or warts that can crust or bleed, usually in areas that see tons of sun. The number of cases has gone up 200 percent in the past three decades.

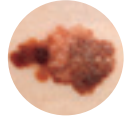
Treatment: Nanotechnology Chemo and radiation destroy healthy cells as well as cancerous ones. With nanotechnology, anticancer drugs are attached to tiny particles that target harmful cells while sparing normal ones. The therapy is relatively new, but it has shown promise in treating SCCs that crop up around the head and neck.



MELANOMA

This rare cancer (only 1 percent of cases) is behind the vast majority of skin-cancer deaths. Caused chiefly by UV exposure, most look like moles, though they often have irregular edges or change in size, shape, or color over time.

Treatment: Immunotherapy Your immune cells have “checkpoint” proteins: They let friendly cells pass while attacking invaders. But some cancer cells look a lot like healthy ones and can slip past. This treatment disables those checkpoints, unleashing the full force of your immune system so it can ID and nuke cancer cells. The meds are so promising, experts say chemo for advanced melanoma will one day be a thing of the past. ■



PHOTOMIX/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (BASAL CELL); BSIP SA/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (SQUAMOUS CELL); SCOTT CAMAZINE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (MELANOMA)