

YOU CAN GET SKIN CANCER WHERE?

A head-to-toe look at some of the surprising places skin cancer can develop and how to protect yourself.

▶ YOUR SCALP

Bald men are obviously the most vulnerable here, but don't assume that your locks have you covered. The sun's rays can easily reach spots where hair is a bit thin or areas exposed by a prominent part. And skin cancer on the scalp is rarely caught in the early, most treatable stage because it's hard to see every spot under your hair, says Deborah S. Sarnoff, M.D., president of The Skin Cancer Foundation.

You have a few options as far as protection goes. The best one, by far, is to wear a hat. "Look for a wide-brim hat—at least 2 inches so it also shades your ears and face—that has an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of 30–50," says NYC-based dermatologist Debra Jaliman, M.D. Companies selling hats with UPF include Coolibar, Wallaroo, and Outdoor Research.

Not a hat person? Invest in a sunscreen designed for hair and scalp. Boston-based dermatopathologist Gretchen Frieling, M.D., is a fan of Coola Scalp & Hair Mist.

▶ THE SKIN AROUND YOUR EYES AND EYELIDS

Even if you dutifully apply sunscreen to your face, you're probably missing around your eyes. If

sunscreen irritates that area, Sarnoff suggests using a product designed for sensitive skin and/or for kids or a waterproof one so it's less likely to run. Sunglasses, of course, are always a must. "They'll reduce your risk of cataracts too," she says. For the best protection, choose large, wraparound sunglasses.

▶ YOUR EARS

Scientists have had people apply sunscreen then stand under black lights to see where they missed. The ears were routinely neglected. "People don't want their hair to get gunked up, or they just forget," Sarnoff says. But ears get regular sun exposure, so remember to apply sunscreen to them.

Also make sure your dermatologist peeks inside the ear canal with a light during your skin check (you're having one once a year, right?); skin cancer can develop there too.

▶ YOUR LOWER LIP

It tends to protrude more than the upper lip, which means it catches more sunrays, says Cynthia Bailey, M.D., a California dermatologist and founder of an eponymous skincare line. Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen or lip balm with SPF. Or go the lipstick route: A thick, opaque formula physically blocks UV rays.

Another way to lower the risk of developing skin cancer

on your lips: Don't smoke. The carcinogens in smoke from cigarettes and pipes can damage the skin cells there and lead to cancer.

▶ YOUR NAILS AND THE SURROUNDING SKIN

If you've ever had warts on your hands, you may be at higher risk for

SUN SAFE
UV RAYS
(INCLUDING UVA
AND UVB) CAUSE
90 PERCENT
OF SKIN CANCER
BY DAMAGING
SKIN CELLS.



squamous cell cancer, Bailey says. If you notice any new or unusual spots around your nails or a dark, vertical stripe running up the nail bed, get it checked out.

► **THE PALMS OF YOUR HANDS**

Melanoma sometimes crops up here, especially in people with dark skin tones. However, cases in this area are more likely to be linked to getting older than to sun exposure, Bailey says. If you notice any new spots or pigment changes in this area, tell your dermatologist.

► **YOUR LOWER BACK**

It's not uncommon for shirts to ride up above the waist of pants or shorts while you go about daily activities, resulting in repeated sun exposure.

"I found a melanoma here on my mother, who was a gardener," Bailey says. "She often would get a sunburn on her lower back when it was exposed as she bent over to tend her plants." If you're going to be outside moving around a lot—gardening, exercising, picking up kids—make sure to cover this spot with sunscreen before getting dressed.

► **YOUR GENITALS**

Yes, you can get skin cancer where the sun literally doesn't shine. "We think in some

cases, but not all, it might be related to having a history of HPV (human papillomavirus)," Sarnoff says. HPV is a common sexually transmitted virus that the body's immune system usually fights off. However, recent research suggests that if HPV lingers for years, it might raise the risk of cancer. For women, the gyno should screen you for HPV during checkups; men, ask your doctor about getting tested. "I recommend people up to age 45 who are sexually active get the HPV vaccine (Gardasil)," Sarnoff says. And when you're at the dermatologist for a skin check, don't be shy: This area needs a once-over.

► **THE TOPS AND SOLES OF YOUR FEET**

During the summer (or if you live in a warm climate) your feet get lots of sun exposure, especially if you wear flip-flops or

sandals, says Bailey, who adds that she has treated many skin cancers on the feet. So don't forget to apply sunscreen there.

Although it's not as common,

the soles of your feet are another place where melanoma shows up; people with dark skin tones are more at risk. (Doctors aren't sure why.) When doing a self-exam (about once a month), be sure to examine your soles and the skin in between toes.

SUN SAFE
UVA RAYS CAN PENETRATE GLASS, SO DON'T SKIP SUNSCREEN BECAUSE YOU'LL BE IN A CAR.



▲ **EASY ON**

Cover all those missed spots with these sunscreens.

AQUAPHOR LIP PROTECTANT + SUNSCREEN

A fave for soothing seriously dry lips, it also has SPF 30. \$4; [target.com](#)

COOLA SCALP & HAIR MIST ORGANIC SUNSCREEN SPF 30

Lightweight and water-resistant for up to 80 minutes. \$26; [coola.com](#)

NEUTROGENA SHEER ZINC KIDS SUNSCREEN STICK SPF 50

It's made with zinc oxide but goes on clear. \$16; [neutrogena.com](#)

BLUE LIZARD SENSITIVE STICK SPF 50

This zinc oxide-based sunscreen is coral reef friendly. \$9; [walgreens.com](#)

SUPERGOOP! SHIMMERSHADE

A pretty way to protect your eyelids with SPF 30. \$24; [supergoop.com](#) ■

