



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Nantucket Health and Human  
Services Department

# SUN SAFETY AND SKIN CANCER

## Skin Cancer

is uncontrolled growth of abnormal skin cells. It happens when DNA damage to skin cells triggers genetic defects.

## Causes

There are 6 different types of skin cancers, but all share the same most common causes: damage from ultraviolet radiation. UV radiation is most often from sunshine or tanning beds.

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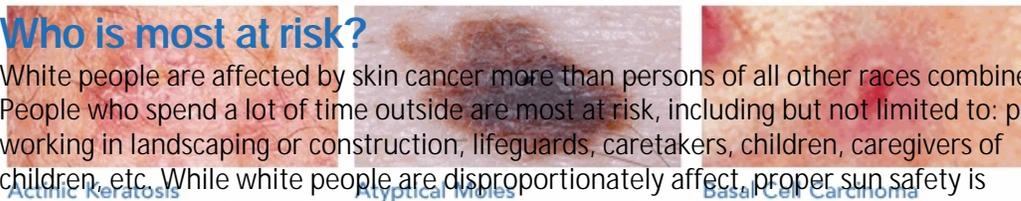
The number of adults with melanoma, a specific type of skin cancer, per 100,000 people on Nantucket in 2015.

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The Cape and Islands region is tied with Melbourne, Florida for the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest skin cancer rates in the nation, according to Blue Cross Blue Shield Association's Health of America Report.

## Who is most at risk?

White people are affected by skin cancer more than persons of all other races combined. People who spend a lot of time outside are most at risk, including but not limited to: people working in landscaping or construction, lifeguards, caretakers, children, caregivers of children, etc. While white people are disproportionately affected, proper sun safety is important for people of all races or ethnic backgrounds.



Actinic Keratosis

Atypical Moles

Basal Cell Carcinoma

## What does proper sun safety mean?



Melanoma

Merkel Cell Carcinoma

Squamous Cell Carcinoma

Sun safety involves the use of UV protective clothing and sunscreen. Sunscreens should be water-resistant or **water-proof** if you are going to be sweating, swimming, or otherwise wet while wearing it.

Sunscreen should be **broad-spectrum**, because it protects against both UVA and UVB rays, which can both contribute to skin damage.

Research has shown that many sunscreens don't work as well as advertised, and that there isn't actually more protection after SPF 50. Dermatologists recommend SPF 30 or higher for everyone, including people who have darker skin. For this reason, **when in doubt, choose SPF 50**. Remember: you **must** reapply sunscreen at least every 2 hours!

Protective clothing may include long-sleeved shirts, pants, wide-brimmed hats, and sunglasses. Look for materials that are light and will **prevent overheating**, while also **protecting you** from harmful rays.

## Don't become **NANTUCKET RED**, wear it instead!

Visit <https://www.aad.org/media/stats/prevention-and-care/sunscreen-faqs> for more sunscreen information.