

If you have skin, you can get skin cancer. While darker skin tones are less susceptible, skin cancers account for 1 to 2 percent of all cancers in Black people, 2 to 4 percent in Asian people and 4 to 5 percent in Hispanic people. When skin cancer does occur in people of color, it tends to be diagnosed at a later stage and with a worse prognosis. Check out these common misconceptions and facts.

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Skin Cancer & Skin of Color



5 Myths About Skin of Color and the Sun

Learn more about skin cancer in people of color on [SkinCancer.org](https://www.SkinCancer.org):



1 MYTH: Skin cancer in dark skin isn't caused by the sun.

FACT: Melanoma in dark skin is more likely to appear where the sun doesn't shine, such as the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. However, squamous cell carcinoma, the most common type of skin cancer in Black patients, is highly linked to UV exposure. Other factors also affect your skin cancer risk, such as genetics, gender, age, certain medications and medical conditions.

2 MYTH: Only dark skin has melanin.

FACT: All skin tones have melanin. There are two types. Eumelanin gives skin black or brown pigment. Pheomelanin appears red or yellow. Your skin color is determined by which type you have more of and how it's dispersed throughout the skin cells. It can be evenly distributed, clustered (think freckles) or somewhere in between.

3 MYTH: Darker skin tones provide natural sun protection.

FACT: Eumelanin does absorb some of the ultraviolet (UV) rays that hit the skin, which may allow more leeway in the sun. But the darkest skin tone only provides the equivalent of SPF 13 — not high enough for sunscreen to earn The Skin Cancer Foundation Seal of Recommendation for safe and effective sun protection.

4 MYTH: People of color don't need to worry about getting sunburned.

FACT: While skin of color may not show the visible redness of a burn, it does, in fact, burn in the sun. Your skin may darken, feel warm to the touch, crack or eventually blister.

5 MYTH: Sun protection isn't necessary for skin of color.

FACT: Sun damage that may look like freckles or a tan in light-colored skin may look like dark spots and uneven skin tone in skin of color. Recent research shows that the visible light portion of the solar spectrum can intensify hyperpigmentation and other skin problems in skin of color. Using a broader-spectrum sunscreen tinted with iron oxide can reduce these risks and help the product blend into the skin. These products are now widely available. Covering up with sun-protective clothing, hats and sunglasses can help keep skin of any color looking its best.



Sidelined by Skin Cancer?

At age 19, then-college football player Josh Paschal was diagnosed with acral lentiginous melanoma (ALM), an uncommon, aggressive and potentially deadly type of skin cancer that appears on the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet or under the nails. Josh had a small lesion on his right foot. Fortunately, his team doctor took action, and Josh wasn't sidelined by his skin cancer for long.



After surgery, immunotherapy and lots of R&R, Josh now plays as a defensive end in the NFL. He spreads awareness for skin cancer, urging regular skin checks to look for anything new, changing or unusual. "Realize you're not invincible," he says. Even if you're 6-foot-3 and 284 pounds of solid muscle.

To read more about Josh's ALM journey and recovery, scan here:

