



Finding The Right Sunscreen For Your Skin Type brought to you by [www.keepthedoctoraway.co.uk](http://www.keepthedoctoraway.co.uk)

By Maire Bonheim.

Every single day in the UK, 200 new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed, and it's rising faster than any other type of deadly cancer, according to the British Skin Foundation. In 80 per cent of cases, it could have been avoided simply by protecting the skin from the sun. Yet a recent survey found that despite all the health risks, Brits still intend to burn this summer.

Anyone can develop skin cancer, but the paler skin types are far more at risk. The darker your skin is naturally, the more melanin it produces, making it easier for you to tan further and protecting your skin from the sun's harmful rays. So the lighter you are, the more likely you are to develop skin cancer – and the more important it is for you to resist the urge to sunbathe! Read through these skin types to decide which one applies to you.

#### Sunscreen Made Simple

SPF stands for Sun Protection Factor, and lets you know how effective the sunscreen is at blocking out the sun's rays – called UVB and UVA rays. The higher the SPF, the more rays are blocked out. Contrary to popular belief, it has nothing to do with how long you can stay in the sun without reapplying – in fact, no matter what SPF you're using, you need to put more on at least every two hours.

#### Pale

You have very pale skin, burn easily and find it difficult to tan. You probably also have fair or red hair, and possibly freckles. If this is your skin type, then unfortunately you're most at risk of developing skin cancer! You shouldn't head to the beach without applying a sunscreen with an SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of at least 30, and skin experts say you shouldn't leave the house without factor 15 on your face, even in winter. There's no point in even attempting to tan – the only safe option for you is a fake one.

#### Fair

You also have fair skin and burn with too much sun, but you do gradually tan. You most likely have fair to medium hair and blue or brown eyes. Unfortunately, you're more likely to develop skin cancer than almost any of the other skin types. You need to choose SPF 30 sunscreen if you're planning to spend time in the sun, and at least SPF 15 for everyday use. If you absolutely have to tan, opt for somewhere between there.

#### Medium

You have light olive skin and tan reasonably easily, although you do burn if you spend too long in the sun. You probably have brown or green eyes. Even though you can tan, you're still risking skin cancer every time your skin burns. Prevent this by applying sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 for everyday use.

#### Olive

You tan easily and only burn if you spend hours in the sun without protection. You probably have brown eyes and dark hair. You may think your tanned skin makes you exempt from skin cancer, but be warned – you're still at risk. Use SPF 15 sunscreen if you're planning to spend the day at the beach.

#### Brown

Your skin is naturally brown, and you have dark hair and brown eyes. In the sun, your skin darkens further, and you only burn if you spend absolutely ages in the sun. It's unlikely you'll develop skin cancer caused by the sun, but you could still face major wrinkling if you don't use sunscreen. You can afford to go for SPF 15 or lower.

## Dark

You have black skin, black hair and dark brown eyes. Your skin gets darker in the sun, but only burns after extreme exposure. People with your skin type rarely develop skin cancer caused by the sun, but it's worth using sunscreen anyway to protect you from premature ageing. Sunscreen with SPF 15 if you intend to spend the day in the sun, or even lower for everyday use, will work best for you.

### Tips For Avoiding Skin Cancer:

- Stay out of the sun between 11am and 3pm – if you have to be outdoors, head for the shade
- Wear at least SPF 15 sunscreen and reapply every two hours – understand that a higher SPF indicates that it provides stronger protection, but not for a greater length of time, so no matter what SPF you use, you'll still need to reapply at least every two hours
- The higher the SPF, the better the sunscreen is at protecting you from skin cancer and ageing. Make sure you're using one that safeguards you against not only UVB rays, but also UVA – an often-overlooked type of ultraviolet light that scientist say does just as much damage
- Apply sunscreen everywhere – don't miss your ears! And apply generously as you would a moisturiser – research shows that most people only put on half as much as they should
- Wear sunglasses and a hat to protect your face, neck and ears – sunscreen alone may not be enough to safeguard these delicate areas. Realise that sunscreen does not protect you completely on its own, so if you're spending hours in the sun, throw on a loose, light-coloured t-shirt too
- Avoid sunbeds, and resist the urge to sunbathe
- Remember that self-tanning products, tanning moisturisers and tanning oil do not contain any UV protection at all
- Whatever your skin type, don't let your skin burn
- Don't forget that harmful UVA and UVB rays can still get through the atmosphere and burn you even on a cloudy day
- The sun's rays are especially damaging to children, so make sure kids are protected with sunscreen, hats and clothes at all times and keep babies out of the sun altogether

Some people argue that a high SPF will cut out too much Vitamin D, which the body needs. However, for fairer skinned people the skin cancer risk outweighs the benefits, especially since you can also get Vitamin D through your diet, according to the British Skin Foundation. They recommend sunscreen with a lower SPF to darker skinned people, who are more likely to develop Vitamin D deficiencies.

If you notice any worrying changes in your skin, or if a mole changes colour or shape, contact a doctor, who will refer you to a dermatologist if necessary.

For more advice on how to lead a healthier lifestyle visit: [www.keepthedoctoraway.co.uk](http://www.keepthedoctoraway.co.uk)

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