

Skin deep: Protecting the body's largest organ

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When you're living with cancer, skin care might not be the first thing on your mind. But it's important to care for your skin, from managing any problems you may experience as a result of cancer or your treatments to protecting your body's largest organ from the sun's rays year round.

1. Remember that sun protection isn't just for summer

Most people remember to apply sunblock at the beach, but you need protection from the sun year round and in different kinds of weather. Even when it's cloudy or snowing, ultraviolet (UV) rays can still affect you. Or when you're in a car, it might feel like you're indoors, but you can still be exposed to UV rays. Keep these things in mind as you plan for time in the sun every day of the year.

2. Use sun protection factor (SPF) daily

No sunscreen can offer 100% protection. However, most experts recommend using sunscreen that is:

- Broad spectrum, which offers protection against both UVA and UVB rays
- Water resistant
- SPF 30 or higher. Although it's true that higher SPF sunscreens can block more of the sun's UVB rays, no sunscreen blocks all of them

There are many daily-use skin care products that have an SPF already built in. Look at your options next time you're in the skin care aisle. You may even find your favorite brand offers a version with SPF.

3. Look for clothing with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) rating

Long sleeves and pants can help protect you from the sun's rays, but not all fabrics offer the same protection. Tightly woven fabrics block more UV rays. Look for clothing that has a rated ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) for days when you plan to spend time in the sun. Keep in mind that when fabric gets wet, it lets more UV rays through.

4. Find a hat that suits your style

Wearing a hat can go a long way toward protecting your head and face from harmful rays. Think about the tops of your ears or your scalp. It's easy to miss those spots when applying sunscreen. If you wear a hat, a large-brimmed hat will provide more coverage than a baseball cap will. You'll find a range of styles that offer great coverage.

5. Wear sunglasses with UV protection

Not all sunglasses are created equal. Make sure you choose sunglasses that filter UV rays, so you can keep the skin around your eyes—and the eyes

themselves—protected.

6. Know that your skin might change while you're living with cancer

You may find that you need to change up your skin care regimen after your diagnosis and throughout treatment. Both cancer itself and the treatments for cancer can cause changes to your skin, such as dryness, itchiness or color changes. Luckily, there are lots of different ways you can manage these symptoms. It's always a good idea to let your healthcare team know if you notice any changes in your skin.

You might find the free **LivingWith™** app helpful for staying on top of your skin care. On the app, you can write or record notes and track pain, all in one place.

Download [LivingWith](#) today.

7. See a dermatologist every year

A dermatologist is a doctor with special training to diagnose and treat skin problems. It's recommended that you see a dermatologist at least once a year for a skin check. This can help you keep track of any changes in your skin over time. If you don't have a dermatologist as part of your healthcare team, ask your doctor if he or she can recommend one.

Taking time to care for your skin

No matter the season—and no matter where you are in your treatment journey—taking a little time to care for your skin is so important, but it's an easy thing to forget when you've got so much else to focus on. We hope these 7 tips can help you take care of your skin every day.