- Skin cancer



COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED
PRINTED FROM PRESSREADER
NOT FOR SALE
PERSONAL COPY

COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED • PRINTED FROM PRESSREADER • NOT FOR SALE • PERSONAL COPY

1

up in places on the body that get little to no sun exposure, such as under the fingernails or toenails and in the mouth and genital areas. That's why everyone should get a yearly skin exam done by a professional and also do regular self-checks of their skin.

MYTH:

Only sun exposure causes skin cancer.

MYTHBUSTER

UV exposure is far from the only factor—genetics, chronic diseases, certain chemicals, medications, radiation, and even viruses can increase your risk for skin cancer, says Adam Friedman, M.D., professor and chair of dermatology at George Washington School of Medicine and Health Sciences. For example, the HPV virus has been linked to squamous cell carcinoma, and a tenth of people with melanoma have a family history of the disease. Also, melanoma can pop

2

MYTH:

Most skin cancer is no big deal.

MYTHBUSTER

Left untreated, it could be a *very* big deal. This is especially true for melanoma, but also consider basal cell carcinoma, which accounts for 80% of cases. It rarely spreads or is deadly, "but if left untreated, it can invade deeper structures like muscle and bone," says Dr. Friedman, resulting in disfigurement. And while melanoma has a 99% five-year survival rate when it is found early, that rate drops to 35% if it's discovered after it has spread to distant parts of the body. This is why it's important to be vigilant about common signs of skin cancer and have a dermatologist check as well, Dr. Friedman says. "Whether it's a changing mole, a sore that won't heal, or an unusual spot in an unexpected area, getting it checked can be lifesaving," he says.



3

MYTH:

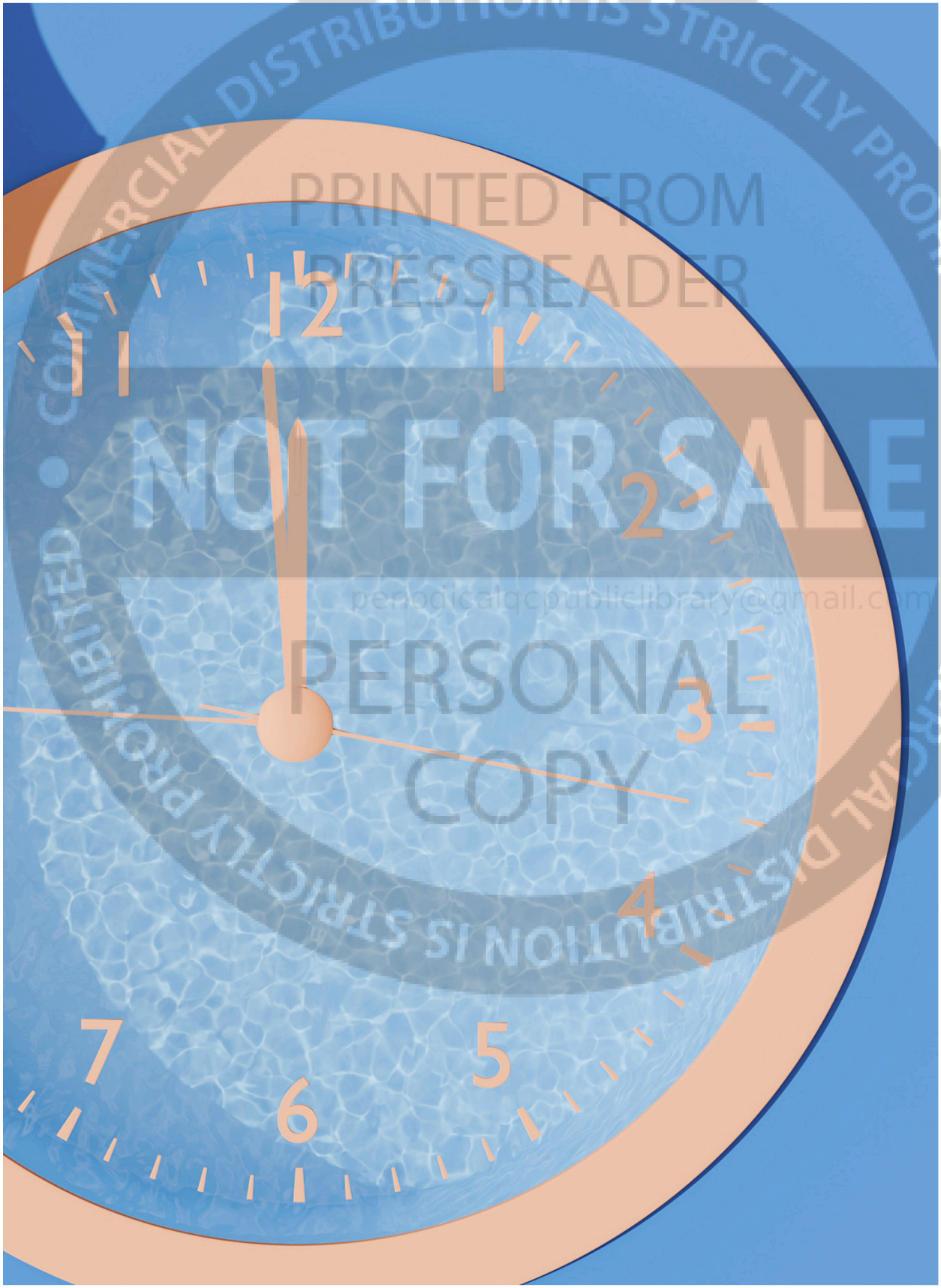
It takes a long time for the sun to harm skin.

MYTHBUSTER

The damage is cumulative, but permanent sun damage can happen with just minutes of unprotected UV exposure—a single severe sunburn can double your lifetime risk for malignant melanoma, the deadliest kind of skin cancer, says Tina Alster, M.D., founding director of the Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery. "Even short periods of exposure—running errands or walking the dog—add to the damage that can lead to skin cancer, and it happens fastest to fair-skinned people," explains Shawn Allen, M.D., a dermatologist in Boulder, CO, and a spokesperson for the Skin Cancer Foundation. That's because when skin is unprotected, the sun harms DNA in its cells and with time can cause them to grow out of control and become cancerous. Your best bet to protect your skin: Slather on SPF (30 or higher) even for short bursts of time in the sun.

GETTY IMAGES.

PRINTED FROM PRESSREADER
NOT FOR SALE
PERSONAL COPY
periodicalqcpublicliblary@gmail.com
PROTECTED • COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED



COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED
PRINTED FROM PRESSREADER
NOT FOR SALE
periodicalqcpubliclibrary@gmail.com
PERSONAL COPY



4

MYTH: Tanning beds are safer now.

MYTHBUSTER

When it comes to skin cancer risk, tanning beds are even more dangerous than the sun. That's because they unleash higher doses of UVA radiation, the kind responsible for skin cancer and premature aging, says Dr. Alster. In fact, using a tanning bed before age 35 increases your risk for malignant melanoma by 75%. And the danger goes beyond melanoma: Using tanning beds also boosts your risk of the less dangerous but much more common basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma. So if you don't want to age prematurely or roll the dice on skin cancer, skip the tanning bed.

GETTY IMAGES.

COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED • PRINTED FROM PRESSREADER • NOT FOR RESALE • PERSONAL COPY



COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED
PRINTED FROM PRESSREADER
NOT FOR SALE
PERSONAL COPY

5

MYTH:

If you don't burn, you don't have to worry about skin cancer.



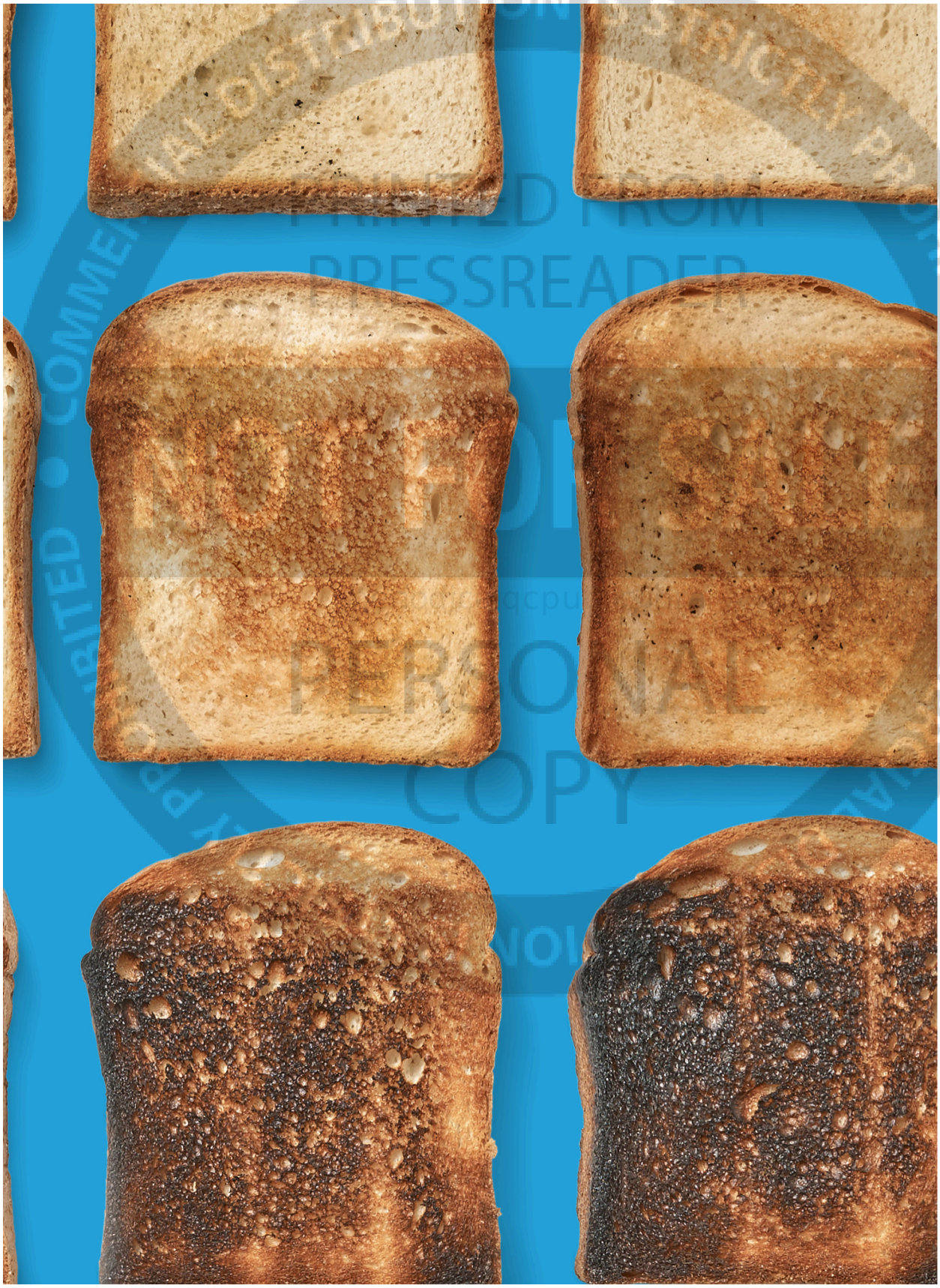
MYTHBUSTER

The melanin in darker skin offers some sun protection, but not enough to prevent skin damage or skin cancer. "If the darkest skin tone were equated to a sunscreen, the FDA wouldn't let you claim that it would prevent skin cancer," Dr. Friedman says. In fact, the melanin protection in Black skin has been estimated at only about 13 SPF. A base tan offers an SPF of only about 3 or 4, far from the recommended SPF 30. And skin cancer in people with darker skin "tends to be found at a later, more dangerous stage," says Dr. Allen. People of color are more likely to get skin cancers related to genetics, and these tend to show up in areas rarely exposed to the sun such as the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet, and under the nails, Dr. Friedman says, adding, "People with darker skin tones should be aware of subtle, persistent skin changes, particularly in areas that aren't exposed to the sun."

To learn more about signs of skin cancer, visit prevention.com/types-of-skin-cancer.

STOCKSY

PRINTED FROM PRESSREADER ... NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION ... PERSONAL COPY



PRINTED FROM PRESSREADER
PERSONAL COPY