

squamous cell carcinomas, Dr. Fein says. To protect your pout, apply a balm with sunscreen, such as **Blistex Daily Conditioning Treatment SPF 20** (\$2.29; drugstores). If you want to top it with gloss, go for a formula that has SPF.

3 WATCH HOW YOU WEAR YOUR HAIR. All types of skin cancer can grow on the scalp—especially if your hair is fine. “Melanomas can be quite aggressive there because the scalp has a rich blood supply and numerous lymphatic channels, both of which encourage the spread of cancer,” Dr. Graf explains. The sliver of skin exposed by your part is also susceptible, so occasionally shift where you part your hair to cut down on constant UV exposure. When spending time outside, protect vulnerable areas with a spray-on sunscreen—dermatologists prefer those made for skin, not hair—or, if your hair is thinning, wear a hat. Be sure to check your scalp for new or unusual spots every month, enlisting your hairstylist’s help if you can’t get a good look on your own. And, if you wear your hair up a lot during the summer, don’t forget to coat all sides of your neck with sunscreen.

4 NEVER SWAP SUNSCREEN FOR SHADE. We’re all for pitching a big umbrella in the sand, but don’t assume that doing so offers a get-out-of-SPF-

free card. “About 50 to 95 percent of rays can bounce up off of water and sand, and hit your skin, even if you’re under an umbrella and surrounded by shade,” Dr. Graf says. And while passing clouds may offer temporary heat relief, they block only 20 percent of UV rays; the other 80 percent soaks right into your skin, even when there’s no sun in sight. Seeking shade while wearing sunscreen is the best way to save your skin.

5 SPRING-CLEAN YOUR SUNSCREEN. Do you tend to buy sunscreen in bulk and hang on to it forever? Bad idea. While the Food and Drug Administration requires that all sunscreens remain at their original strength for at least three years, Dr. Graf tells patients to toss theirs after one year if there’s no expiration date on the bottle, because “you really have no idea how long it sat on the store shelf before you bought it,” she says. Luckily, most bottles now carry expiration dates (usually on the back or bottom). Odds are, you can still pull from the three-pack you bought at Costco last year, but keep this in mind: You should always apply 1 ounce of sunscreen—enough to fill a shot glass—30 minutes before heading outside, and then reapply that same amount every two hours. In reality, that means an 8-ounce bottle should never last from one season to the next.

Is it a mole or skin cancer?

Find out with this quick guide.

Check your skin every few months, because most skin cancers start as irregular spots, says Ariel Ostad, MD, assistant professor of dermatology at New York University.



Normal mole

WHAT IT IS: A mole is a harmless spot that develops in childhood or later in life and can be found anywhere. **LOOKS LIKE:** Typically smaller than a pencil eraser, moles are round and symmetrical with smooth borders and an even color. According to Dr. Ostad, “They usually don’t evolve or change shape.”



Actinic keratosis

WHAT IT IS: Actinic keratosis is a common precancerous growth often found on your scalp, face, hands, or forearms. “They should be removed because 5 to 10 percent of them become cancerous,” Dr. Ostad explains. **LOOKS LIKE:** You’ll see a rough, flesh-toned pink or red patch that may be itchy or scaly.



Basal cell carcinoma

WHAT IT IS: Caused by sun damage and typically found on the face, this type of cancer is easy to treat if it’s caught early. **LOOKS LIKE:** It normally appears as a pinkish or reddish patch that may bleed or scab. “Picture a pimple that seems to heal, only to return again,” Dr. Ostad says.



Squamous cell carcinoma

WHAT IT IS: This type of cancer often appears on the body, legs, or hands and is curable if caught early. **LOOKS LIKE:** You’ll notice a thick growth that can peel and bleed and may have an irregularly shaped border. “It’s more like a wart than a pimple,” Dr. Ostad says.



Melanoma

WHAT IT IS: This serious form of cancer can spread quickly but is curable if caught early. “Melanoma is usually found on women’s legs, rarely on their faces,” Dr. Ostad says. “In men, it’s more common on the torso.” **LOOKS LIKE:** Alert your derm if you see a dark, irregularly shaped growth with uneven reddish-brown, brown, or black coloring. —JENNIFER GOLDSTEIN

The best (new) blocks under the sun

This summer’s crop of sunscreens has your back (chest, face, etc.) covered.

Antioxidant-packed Coppertone NutraShield With Dual Defense SPF 30 Lotion (\$9.99; drugstores)—a featherweight formula that’s loaded with vitamins A, B₅, E and Indian gooseberry extract (a significant source of vitamin C)—helps to prevent sun damage and repair skin.

Ultrahigh SPF Neutrogena Ultra Sheer Sunblock SPF 100+ (\$11.99; drugstores), with its high SPF, is more likely to supply ideal protection. (Still reapply every two hours!)

Hands-free and cooling Banana Boat Ultra Defense UltraMist SPF 85 (\$10.49; drugstores) is perfect for shielding sand-covered kids or touching-up your sweaty skin after a long run. The aloe-laced mist absorbs on contact—no need to rub it in—ensuring hands never get slick.

