

Suntan

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She added that sunless tanners, which give the skin a fake glow without sun exposure, are not selling well this year.

According to a survey by the American Academy of Dermatology, 81 percent polled still think they look good after having been out in the sun. More than half of those surveyed reported getting a tan in the past year.

Staight's advice to students is to limit exposure during the sun's peak hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"Wear sunscreen, cover up, wear a hat and sunglasses — year-round," she said.

While young people like the feel of the sun, they may be naive to the long-term effects of their actions.

"When we are young, we don't realize that our skin does get older," Staight said.

Common cancer

Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers, according to the American Cancer Society. Melanoma accounts for about 4 percent of skin cases, but it causes about 79 percent of skin cancer deaths, making it the most deadly form. The number of new melanoma cases in the United States is on the rise, with ACS estimating there will be 53,600 new cases in 2002. About 7,400 people are expected to die of the disease.

Kitterman also advised against students laying on campus lawns or sunbathing at all.

He said 80 percent of the average person's cumulative lifetime skin damage occurs before they are 18 to 20 years old. So, most students have already done the majority of harm to their skin by the time they hit college.

However, it's never too late to be protected and keep existing skin

problems from becoming worse.

Kitterman said the darker an individual's complexion, such as those of Italian heritage, the less likely they will experience long-term skin damage. People who are most at risk of skin cancer include those who have white, fair skin, blue eyes and red hair.

"People who always burn pay the price," Kitterman said. Instead of being paranoid of being diagnosed with skin cancer, Kitterman

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Paula Staight
director of health education
University Health Center

just recommended being cautious of overexposure to the sun.

"We should have enjoyable lifestyles and do things," he said. "But if we can lessen the potential damage we should do that."

Numerous skin care officials recommended taking the same precautions in the fall and winter as during the spring and summer months. This includes the recent cloudy spring weather on campus.

"Overcast skies don't mean you're not getting sun," Kitterman said.

Coverage is the best prevention

Kitterman recommended buying sunscreen with a sun protective factor, or SPF, of at least 15 to 30 and with sun-barrier ingredients such as Parosol 1789 or titanium dioxide.

Kitterman said brands such as



Thomas Patterson Emerald

Students spending extended amounts of time outdoors are advised to wear a sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor of at least 15. Even if the sky is overcast, harmful radiation still gets through and can cause skin cancer, the most common form of cancer.

Shade, Pre-Sun and Ombrelle contain Parosol 1789.

However, no sunscreen completely protects against the sun's harmful rays. Kitterman said the protection of SPFs above 30 is minimal and not a good excuse to stay in the sun an extra hour.

Kitterman added that certain

brands of sunscreen can irritate some people's skin.

"Keep shifting brands until you find one that fits you," he said.

He recommended applying sunscreen liberally, 15 to 30 minutes before exposure to the sun, and then reapplying the lotion 15 to 30 minutes after being out in the sun.

But he said the general rule is to reapply every two hours, especially if a person has been sweating, swimming or skiing.

"If you wait two and a half hours, you'll burn," he said.

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