



The high temperatures and shining sun of the month of April have given the students of Antioch Community High School a taste of summer; and have served as a reminder that the much anticipated season is right around the corner. Soon, it will be time to put away the backpacks and school books, and take out the sunglasses and swimsuits. With the goal of some ACHS students being to achieve getting the perfect tan, sunscreen, along with the dangers of the sun, seem to be forgotten about. Although students may swipe some sunscreen on while basking in the sun, what they probably aren't aware of is how the risk that is taken while sunbathing could potentially affect their lives forever.

According to Bridgett Hallstrom, Nurse Practitioner of Dermatology Physicians and Surgeons Ltd., in Barrington, the sun can do critical damage to the skin.

"Ultraviolet light changes normal cells to abnormal, which changes the DNA," said Hallstrom.

The abnormal cells then proceed to alter the other cells of the body, resulting in the spread of cancer.

"There are three types of cancer; Basal Cell, Squamous Cell, and Melanoma," said Hallstrom. "Basal Cell is the most common and one in five adults will get it."

According to Hallstrom, while Basal Cell is not fatal and doesn't spread, Melanoma is the most dangerous form. According to dermonocology.com, the lifetime risk of developing Melanoma is 1/39.

"If caught early, [Melanoma] is 95% curable, if not, you can die," said Hallstrom. "It depends on how early it is found and how deep it is."

In 1992, Karen Day, ACHS science teacher, was diagnosed with Melanoma in her leg. "[Surgeons] cut [the cancerous skin] out, there was no chemo, and no radiation," said Day. "Every month they removed a freckle to see if it was anywhere else."

According to Day, she was diagnosed with Melanoma because of her exposure to the sun. "I had childhood sunburns, and more burns and blistering is more likely to cause Melanoma," said Day.

Day also said that although she does not stay out of the sun completely, she takes many more precautions while being outdoors.

"I wear 50 [SPF] sunscreen, a rash guard, which has UV-protective material, and a hat," said Day.

While most people apply sunscreen before they plan to go outside, they do not reapply it later on in the afternoon.

"Avoiding the sun and limiting exposure between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. is good, and wearing UVA and UVB sun block with an SPF of 20," said Hallstrom. "Reapply the sun block every couple of hours."

Regardless of the hazards of tanning, most people still tan to achieve that desirable glow. "It is hard because our society likes the look of the healthy and bronzed glow, and it is kind of counter cultural," said Hallstrom.

Though the dangers from tanning may not be evident at first, the consequences will be faced later in life.

"All skin cancer numbers are going up, and Melanoma has easily doubled in the past 25 years," said Hallstrom.

During the summer season, most will find it difficult to avoid being outdoors, however, just by being responsible and safe by using sunscreen could save your life.

The real dangers of tanning and simple solutions to the ever-growing problem

Tanning dangers

By Jessica Gaido



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