

## Skin Cancer Risk Concerningly High in Millennials & Gen Xers



 **1 in 5**

Americans will develop skin cancer by the age of 70

 **>2**

People die of skin cancer in the US every hour

 **>5**

Lifetime sunburns doubles your risk of melanoma

 **5.6%**

Estimated decrease of melanoma cases expected worldwide in 2023

 **86%**

Of Melanomas can be attributed to UV radiation from the sun

 **99%**

Survival rate when melanoma is detected early

## Skin Cancer Risk Concerningly High in Millennials & Gen Xers

A recent scientific survey conducted by DermTech, Inc. identified a number of alarming trends concerning the sun exposure habits and skin health knowledge of millennials and Gen Xers. The survey's findings emphasize the need for increased education on skin cancer risks and the importance of preventative measures. To address the need for further education in these areas, DermTech, Inc. recently launched Sun Regrets, a campaign focused on educating Americans on skin health, risk factors for nonmelanoma skin cancer, and what preventative measures can be taken to reduce harm from ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

### Skin Cancer Risk Factors

Repeated or prolonged exposure to UV rays, either from sunlight or from tanning beds, is a significant risk factor for skin damage and for a range of nonmelanoma skin cancers (NMSCs). UV radiation is a proven carcinogen, and prolonged or repeated exposure to UV rays damages the DNA of skin cells, leading to genetic mutations that can cause premature aging, skin damage, and both melanoma skin cancers and nonmelanoma skin cancers.

Nonmelanoma skin cancers (NMSCs), which include all cancers occurring in the skin that are not melanoma, affect 3.3 million

Americans every year. And nearly 40 million Americans each year are affected by actinic keratosis (AK), a slow-forming precancerous skin growth that, left untreated, can turn into squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), one of the most common types of NMSCs. SCC, along with basal cell carcinoma (BCC) and the majority of NMSCs, are caused primarily by repeated or prolonged exposure to UV radiation from the sun or tanning beds. Taking proper precautions can help prevent skin damage and lower NMSC risk.

But despite how common and preventable many NMSCs are, a new survey has revealed that while most millennials and Gen Xers consider themselves mindful of sun exposure, most are not taking the actual steps necessary to protect against preventable NMSCs.

### Skin Cancer Survey Findings

A new survey conducted by Onepoll on behalf of DermTech, Inc. asked 1,000 millennials and 1,000 Gen Xers questions about their sun exposure habits and skin health knowledge. While 75 percent of survey respondents claimed they were mindful of sun exposure, the survey revealed concerning information about actual behavior, knowledge, and preventative practices.

The survey revealed significant room for improvement in skin protection practices. Despite most respondents considering themselves "mindful" of sun exposure, a

mere 19 percent of respondents reported wearing sunscreen year-round. Nearly 30 percent of Gen X respondents admitted to never wearing sunscreen, and a higher percentage of women (30 percent) than men (23 percent) reported not using sunscreen at all. Survey respondents also reported failing to apply sunscreen to all areas of the body exposed to the sun, including susceptible but frequently overlooked areas like the ears, lips, scalp, and hairline.

This behavior seems likely linked to a gap in understanding about risk factors for skin cancer. Of those surveyed, only 37 percent of millennials and 45 percent of Gen Xers understood that prolonged sun exposure could cause precancerous lesions.

Equally concerning, the survey uncovered alarming data regarding tanning bed use and misconceptions. Even though tanning bed use is linked to a higher risk of skin

cancer, 35 percent of survey respondents admitted to using tanning beds, and the survey found that twice as many millennials as Gen Xers falsely believed that tanning beds were safer than outdoor tanning (22 percent vs. 11 percent).

### **The Importance of Education and Prevention**

The survey also highlighted the limited understanding of skin cancer among respondents. Of those included in the survey, only 44 percent claimed to feel knowledgeable about any type of skin cancer in general, with even lower percentages feeling knowledgeable about specific types of common NMSCs, like BCC and SCC.

When presented with images of various skin lesions, one in three participants was unable to distinguish between different types of skin cancers and precancers. Notably, a



significant proportion of respondents were unaware that slow-healing open sores could even be indicative of skin cancer.

Dr. Elizabeth K. Hale, a board-certified dermatologist and clinical associate professor at New York University Langone Medical Center, emphasized the urgent need for education regarding NMSC prevention.

“The good news,” Hale says, “is that millennials and Gen Xers are concerned about how much sun they are getting, but they still aren’t following key steps to ensure they protect their skin, such as wearing

sunscreen year-round and remembering to put sunscreen on all areas that are exposed to the sun.”

## Sun Regrets Campaign

To address the knowledge gaps revealed by the survey and to promote skin health awareness, DermTech, Inc. has launched its Sun Regrets campaign. This important resource aims to educate Americans about the risks of skin cancer, the factors contributing to NMSC, and the importance of preventative measures to mitigate UV damage.

*Did you enjoy this blog post? Check out our other blog posts as well as related topics on our Webinar page.*

*QPS is a GLP- and GCP-compliant contract research organization (CRO) delivering the highest grade of discovery, preclinical and clinical drug research development services. Since 1995, it has grown from a tiny bioanalysis shop to a full-service CRO with 1,100+ employees in the U.S., Europe and Asia. Today, QPS offers expanded pharmaceutical contract R&D services with special expertise in neuropharmacology, DMPK, toxicology, bioanalysis, translational medicine and clinical development. An award-winning leader focused on bioanalytics and clinical trials, QPS is known for proven quality standards, technical expertise, a flexible approach to research, client satisfaction and turnkey laboratories and facilities. Through continual enhancements in capacities and resources, QPS stands tall in its commitment to delivering superior quality, skilled performance and trusted service to its valued customers. For more information, visit [www.qps.com](http://www.qps.com) or email [info@qps.com](mailto:info@qps.com).*