

THE WONDERS OF SKIN



THEN AND NOW

1. Separately interview at least two older members of your family (parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.), asking them about their beliefs and attitudes about sun exposure and melanoma prevention.

- How much sun exposure did you have as a child? At work, over the years? In recreation or sports, over the years?
- What were your thoughts about sun exposure when you were younger? Now?
- What were your feelings then about having a tan? Now?
- What did you know then about melanoma, the dangerous skin cancer? Now?
- Did you think about self-examination for melanoma, then? Now?

2. Based on what you learned in your interviews, develop a training session for your family members. Find a creative way to share all you have learned about sun safety and melanoma prevention with them.

Important Notice: This magazine provides general information about an array of skin health issues. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult a doctor.

SKIN DEEP

Write an essay on one of these topics:

- How are issues like tanning, tattooing, and piercing intertwined with current concepts of beauty and attractiveness? How do our concepts of beauty and attractiveness change over time like fashions? Do you believe it is possible to be fashionable and healthy?
- The maxim "Beauty is only skin deep" means that external attractiveness has no relation to the essential goodness or quality of a person. What do you think about the focus in our society today on physical appearance? What personality characteristics do you consider to be beautiful and perhaps as or more important than looks?

For more information about *The Wonders of Skin: Looking Good, Being Healthy* program, contact:

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THE WONDERS OF SKIN

LOOKING GOOD, BEING HEALTHY

FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

MELISSA'S STORY

My sister, Melissa, and I were born 20 months apart and have always been close. We looked so much alike that people would confuse us. Until we were nine, we had identical wardrobes, except for the colors. As teenagers we spent hours and hours on the beach or by a pool, using only baby oil on our skin.



Maribeth and Melissa

In January 2001, when Melissa was 26 and working at *Teen Vogue* magazine in New York, a mole on her shoulder became cancerous. I was devastated to learn that my sister had melanoma and that the cancer had spread to lymph nodes under her arm.

Once a week for seven weeks, Melissa traveled by train to Philadelphia to receive an experimental vaccine that she hoped would stop the spread of the cancer and allow her to live longer. But by Thanksgiving, her melanoma had spread and she was having trouble talking, as if her tongue was paralyzed. Later we learned this was caused by a seizure from a tumor in her brain.

Melissa's condition became very serious and her life became a series of surgeries, radiation, and chemotherapy. By spring of 2003, Melissa's cancer had spread not only to more lymph nodes and her brain, but also to her liver and spine. Three days before Christmas, she was admitted to the hospital. On Christmas Eve, she slipped into a coma and died two days later.

It's important to realize that a large factor in Melissa's cancer was her love of the sun. Like many young people we didn't take the risks seriously. Now, I know better. I miss her every, every day.

Melissa's sister Maribeth is now a pediatrician, mother, and advocate for sun safety awareness.

What is your reaction to Melissa's story? How might it influence your own sun safety behaviors?

Share Melissa's story with your family. Record how you think Melissa's story may influence their sun safety habits.

FACTS:

- ⚡ Skin cancer, caused by overexposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun, tanning beds, and sun lamps, is the most common and the fastest growing cancer in the United States.
- ⚡ Any severe sunburn before the age of eighteen dramatically increases a person's likelihood of developing melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.
- ⚡ One in six Americans will develop skin cancer.

SUN SAFETY TIPS:

- ⚡ Stay in the shade whenever you can.
- ⚡ Minimize sun exposure between 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M.
- ⚡ Generously apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or higher.
- ⚡ Reapply sunscreen every two hours when outdoors, even on cloudy days, and reapply immediately after swimming or strenuous activities.
- ⚡ Wear a hat that shades your face and neck, and clothing that covers your body.
- ⚡ Wear UV-protective sunglasses to protect your eyes.
- ⚡ Avoid reflective surfaces, which can reflect up to 85 percent of the sun's damaging rays.
- ⚡ Avoid tanning parlors.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SKIN CANCER, VISIT THESE WEBSITES:

www.americanskin.org www.skincancer.org www.epa.gov/sunwise/kids.html www.cdc.gov/ChooseYourCover

Dear Tina and Pete

ACNE

Q I have bad acne and feel ugly and self-conscious. My acne is ruining my social life. Do you have any suggestions for me?

A First of all, we want to let you know that acne is a part of growing up. Millions of teens throughout time have struggled with acne. We know that having acne can affect your self-esteem, but remember—who you are as a person is far more important than your physical appearance. Acne is a condition that often persists, but can be treated with good results. Acne can be stopped!

Here are some steps you can take at home to establish a cleansing routine.

- Wash gently with mild soap and water. Too much rubbing can actually worsen acne.
- Shampoo regularly and keep hair off the face as much as possible to prevent oils from getting on the skin.
- Try over-the-counter skin products that have a drying agent (such as benzoyl peroxide).
- Don't pick, pop, or squeeze your pimples. This can injure your skin and underlying tissues and cause scarring.
- Carry individual packets of alcohol wipes to wipe away the extra oil when you get hot and sweaty.

If the above steps do not help your acne, consider visiting a doctor for advice and treatment.

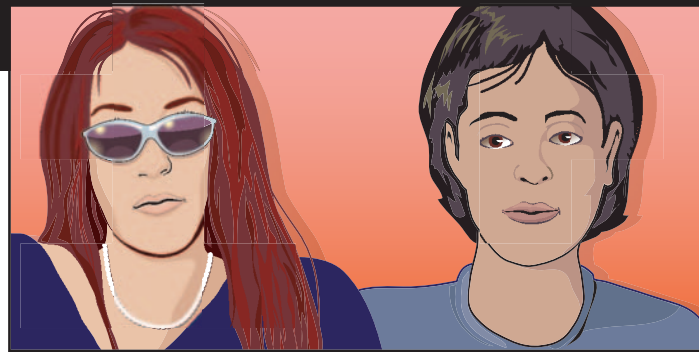
TATTOOS

Q I think body tattoos are really cool. I want to get a large, colorful one on my upper right arm. What do you think?

A First, ask yourself what your reasons are for wanting the tattoo. Think about how you *might* be viewed by other people if you have a tattoo, and how you *want* to be viewed by other people. What may seem “cool” to you now may not seem so cool when you get older.

Clothing and hairstyles are easy to change. Tattoos are permanent and not easy to remove. In fact, more than 50 percent of the people who get tattoos try to remove them later, usually after they enter the work world.

Getting a tattoo can be expensive, painful, and risky. It's important to understand the many risks involved before you decide to get a tattoo—the risk of acquiring HIV, severe skin irritation, excessive bleeding, and keloids (thick scarring at the site of the tattoo). Some people are allergic to the tattoo dye.



Check the laws in your state about tattooing. Most reputable studios require individuals to be eighteen years old before they will do a tattoo or body piercing. Any studio that gives a tattoo or piercing to an individual younger than eighteen without parental permission is probably not a safe place.

Tattoo removal is difficult (sometimes impossible), painful, and very expensive. Sometimes removal may cause permanent discoloration or scarring of the skin.

Think of other ways that are safer and less permanent to express your individualism, creativity, and independence—a removable temporary tattoo? A henna (plant dye) tattoo?

We encourage you to talk with friends or classmates who have been tattooed to find out about their personal experiences.

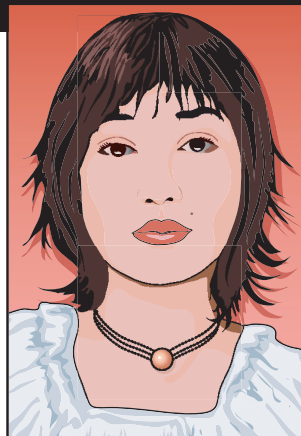
HERPES

Q I noticed that my friend has a blister on her lip. Should I be worried about sharing a water bottle with her?

A It sounds like your friend has herpes simplex Type 1, a contagious virus that is easily passed from one person to another. The herpes simplex virus often affects the lips, mouth, nose, chin, or cheeks. To prevent getting Type 1 herpes from your friend who has a lip blister (also called a cold sore or fever blister), do not kiss her on the lips or share lip balm, a drinking glass, or eating utensils.

There's another type of herpes that is called Type 2 or genital herpes. It is also very contagious. It's spread through sexual contact. As many as one in four Americans has genital herpes. It is characterized by blisters or sores in and around the vaginal area, on the penis, around the anus, and on the buttocks or thighs. These start as small red bumps, then become blisters, and then become painful open sores.

If you suspect you have herpes, see a doctor immediately. Medications can reduce and shorten the duration of the symptoms of herpes. There is no cure for herpes; repeated outbreaks are prevented with medication.



PIERCING

Q My best friend and I have the same birthday. We want to get our tongues pierced to celebrate. What do you think of body piercing?

A Body piercing procedures may be painful and carry the risk of an allergic reaction, infection, hepatitis, ripping, scarring, or tearing of the skin.

Infection is a common complication of mouth piercings, because millions of bacteria live in the mouth. Tongue piercings can cause chipped and broken teeth and gum problems. Some people have even choked on loose mouth jewelry.



WARTS

Q My brother just told me he noticed some small growths on his penis. What's that all about?

A Your brother probably has genital warts caused by a virus. He should see a doctor. Genital warts are usually small growths that increase in number. They can easily be transmitted from one sexual partner to another. Warts can be removed with topical medicines or surgery. In females, the wart virus in the vagina and cervix can cause cancer.



For more information on the above topics, visit www.kidshealth.org.

TIME FOR R & R

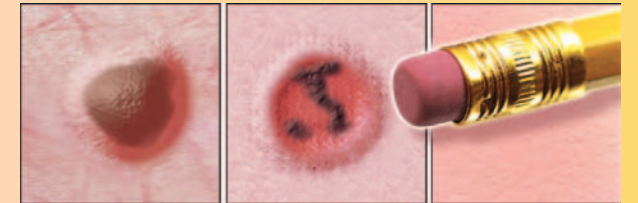
Locate print materials (books, pamphlets, etc.) and use reputable websites to learn more about tattoos, body piercing, herpes 1 and 2, or genital warts. Write a news article with important information about one of these topics that would really appeal to students in your school.



ABCDs of Melanoma

Melanoma is a deadly skin cancer. Melanoma can appear suddenly as a new mole (fleshy growth), or it can develop slowly in or near an existing mole.

Periodic self-examination is the best way to catch melanoma at an early stage. Inspect the skin of your entire body under bright light, using a mirror to examine hard-to-see areas.



You can recognize melanoma if you learn these ABCDs. A lesion may be melanoma if:

A – its shape is **Asymmetrical**

B – **Border** is irregular or jagged

C – **Color** may be variegated, black, brown, red, or white

D – **Diameter** is greater than a pencil eraser head (5mm)

If you see any of the following, which may be signs of skin cancer or pre-cancer, see a doctor immediately.

- A skin growth that increases in size and looks pearly, translucent, tan, brown, black, red, pink, or multicolored.
- A mole that changes in color or in texture, becomes irregular in shape, or gets larger.
- A spot or growth that continues to itch, hurt, crust, scab, erode, or bleed.
- An open sore that lasts for more than 4 weeks, or heals and then reopens.
- A dry, rough, or scaly growth that may produce a pricking or tender sensation.

As a family, create a Webpage, brochure, or poster of the ABCDs of Melanoma. Use information from the websites listed on the front cover.