

Skin

Sun Worshipper Reveals Red, Blistered Face After Skin Cancer Treatment

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Tanning in the sun and in tanning beds raises the risk of skin cancer. (Photo: Getty Images)

You've heard for years that you should wear sunscreen regularly and avoid tanning as much as possible to lower your risk of developing skin cancer. One woman also heard the warnings and chose to ignore them — and now she's sharing what can happen when you do.

Margaret Murphy is posting on her Facebook page a series of selfies of her red, blistering face, which, she says, show the results of skin cancer treatment. The 45-year-old says that she spent more than a decade tanning in Greece while using sunscreen and regularly visited tanning beds. As a result, Murphy developed precancerous cells on her face.

“Unfortunately, all this lovely tanning has a price to pay cause now I have precancerous cells on my face and have started treatment to remove them,” Murphy wrote on Facebook.

Murphy is sharing daily photos of her skin during the four-week topical treatment prescribed by her dermatologist, to try to raise awareness of the dangers of tanning. “I heard all the warnings years ago and closed my eyes and ears to it all,” she wrote. “Maybe someone will open their eyes to this if it's closer to home.”



Mag's Murphys Journey

about 2 weeks ago



Day 3

Day 12



👍 110 💬 15 ➦ 55

For now, Murphy says, the treatment is “quite painful and gruesome as the weeks go on but, on the good side, it should get rid of the cells and treatment is only for a month.” She notes that she’s not looking for sympathy; she just wants people to be smarter about sun safety.

Mag's Murphys Journey 
 last Thursday

Day 19
 I resemble a red panda 🐼🐼
 No longer swollen , around the nose and chin are the tightest and sorest part
 Over ONE MILLION views around the world been on 6 radio channels and lots
 of newspapers sharing this journey ,I'm gobsmacked folks,well done
 Interview today with Pat Kenny on news talk if you can pick it up on podcast
 there was a dermatologist on after me , she was very informative ,worth a
 listen



👍 478 💬 52 ➦ 143

Gary Goldenberg, MD, medical director of the dermatology faculty practice at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, tells Yahoo Beauty that sun exposure and tanning beds are closely linked with skin cancer. “It’s clear that UV damages cellular DNA and causes skin cancer,” he says.

New York City dermatologist Doris Day, MD, author of the upcoming book *Skinfluence*, agrees. “Anybody with enough sun exposure over enough time will eventually develop skin cancer,” Day says.

According to the American Cancer Society, skin cancer is the most common form of cancer. More than 5.4 million basal and squamous cell skin cancers are diagnosed each year, the organization says, and an estimated 76,380 cases of melanoma — the deadliest form of skin cancer — were diagnosed in 2016.

Murphy’s treatment isn’t rare — Day says she prescribes something similar “all the time.”

Dermatologist Jill Waibel, MD, medical director and owner of Miami Dermatology & Laser Institute, tells Yahoo Beauty that there are several treatment options available to patients with precancerous cells. Those include cryotherapy (which freezes off pre-skin cancers), medical photodynamic therapy (PDT), and topical medications.

There are several topical medications, including Efudex (5-FU), Tolak, Solareze gel, and Aldara, Waibel says, which are essentially topical types of chemotherapy prescribed by a dermatologist. “These creams are effective in treating certain skin problems such as pre-skin cancers and other conditions that could be cancerous,” she says.

Creams are used to treat sun-damaged cells in order to prevent their developing into skin cancer that would need to be surgically removed, Goldenberg explains. Blistering is common with some of these topical medications, Day says, but it will eventually clear up — and lower a person’s skin cancer risk. “The good news is that your skin is always repairing itself,” Day notes.

To lower your risk of developing precancerous skin cells, Day recommends wearing sunscreen daily and getting regular skin checks by your dermatologist. (The American Academy of Dermatology recommends asking your doctor how often you should get your skin checked based on your individual risk. However, many recommend annual checks.)

And finally, experts agree that you should limit sun exposure as much as possible. “It’s life and death,” Day says. “It’s really important to get this message out.”