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TRENDING

By Korin Miller

## This Guy's Leg Got Sunburned Twice, And Now It Looks Like Neapolitan Ice Cream

A photo of a "double sunburn" is going viral online, but how bad is it really to get one burn on top of another? Dermatologists weigh in.



Dealing with one sunburn is painful enough. Getting burned twice in a short period of time? *Ouch*. A photo making the rounds on Imgur shows a man who experienced just that—and got a “Neapolitan” sunburn in the process. In the picture, the man’s knee is exposed, showing white, pink, and brown stripes from too much sun exposure.

Reddit user Pooter7 originally posted the image in June 2014. It's gaining steam now that Imgur user Torianne22 reposted it, titling it "Kneepolitan." While many Reddit and Imgur users laughed about the man's skin's resemblance to ice cream, experts say getting a double burn like this is actually pretty serious.

"It's not good for your skin," New York City dermatologist Doris Day, M.D., author of *Forget the Facelift*, tells SELF. "If you get another burn in a short time, your skin is still healing. It's like kicking someone when they're down." As the old, dead skin peels off, new, raw skin is exposed, and it hasn't had time to build up resistance yet, Day says. Damaging it with another burn can be incredibly painful because that newer skin is more sensitive.

Not only is a burn on top of a burn painful, it can dramatically increase your cancer risk. Sunburns and UV exposure cause skin-cell damage, and it takes time for your body to repair the cells, Gary Goldenberg, M.D., medical director of the Dermatology Faculty Practice at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, tells SELF. "Adding another sunburn will add more stress to the already stressed system trying to repair damaged and possibly abnormal cells," he adds. This makes it more likely that your skin won't be able to repair abnormal cells, increasing your odds of developing skin cancer, including melanoma. Not only does a double burn boost your chance of getting skin cancer, it also increases the odds that you'll develop unusual skin pigmentation and wrinkles, Goldenberg says.

Of course, sometimes sunburns happen. If you get one, Day recommends keeping your skin away from anything hot, including hot showers. "You really want to minimize anything that inflames the skin," she says. "When you have a burn, you don't want to burn the skin any more."

If you can't (or don't want to) stay out of the sun, experts recommend covering up with sun-protective clothing. "Once you have that burn, you have to physically protect your skin with a layer of SPF clothing," Day says. "Sunscreen is not enough." Goldenberg also recommends staying in the shade as much as possible to give your damaged skin time to heal.

Finally, hydrate like crazy—inside and out. Day suggests drinking plenty of water and using lotions that contain shea butter, hyaluronic acid, and ceramides to moisturize your skin. And if the burn is really bad, call your doctor—you may need something stronger to combat the inflammation.