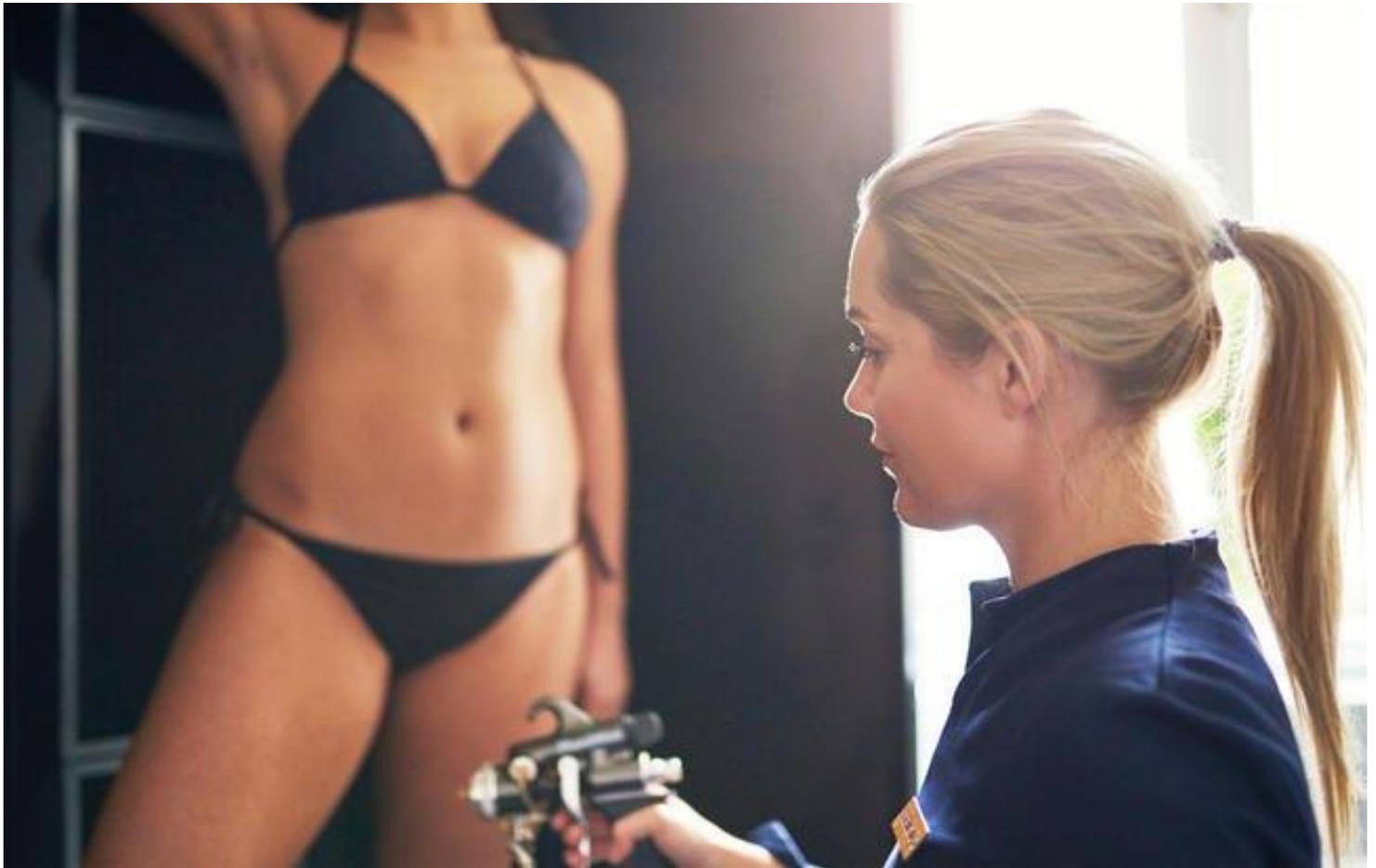


This Is What Every Woman Should Know Before Getting A Spray Tan

There are a few downsides to this "safer" solution.

BY KORIN MILLER August 15, 2017



You've heard it before: Tanning is bad for you. Among other things, it increases your risk of developing fine lines, wrinkles, brown spots, and of, course, skin cancer. If you like the way you look with a darker skin tone, but (understandably) don't want to put your health at risk, it makes sense that you'd turn to a spray tan. Just know this: You shouldn't get one right before going to the dermatologist.

Spray tans make your skin darker, which you already know. But they also cover up all the marks on your skin, which may make your moles look off when they're not, says Joshua Zeichner, M.D., a New York City-based board-certified dermatologist. Spray-tanned moles can look atypical both to your doctor's naked eye and under a dermascope, which is a magnifier that derms use to look at moles to tell if they seem okay or potentially cancerous. That's why Zeichner recommends holding off on spray tanning for at least two weeks before getting a skin check to avoid any unnecessary biopsies on spots.

Luckily, if your yearly dermatology appointment is right before your best friend's wedding, this is definitely something docs have seen before—and they can usually deal. "Many of my patients have fake tans when I see

them and it usually does not cause an issue," says Gary Goldenberg, M.D., assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital.

One more thing dermatologists want you to know before you spray: While spray tans are much better than "regular" tans, your skin is actually more vulnerable to free radical damage from sunlight for up to 24 hours after you get a spray tan, says Cynthia Bailey, M.D., a diplomate of the American Board of Dermatology and president and CEO of Advanced Skin Care and Dermatology Inc. That's due to dihydroxyacetone, the ingredient that actually stains your skin—it temporarily increases your skin's UV damage potential, she says.

If you want to lower your odds of developing skin cancer, Goldenberg says the same rules apply whether you have a spray tan or not: Wear sunscreen daily, stay in the shade when you can, and avoid direct sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. whenever you can.

If you want to get a spray tan, great! Just be sure to still remember your sunscreen, and try to hold off until after you see your doctor.