

...Asking for a friend.

Transcript - Mini Episode: Sick Burn (Sunscreen Tips & Tricks)

Ever had an embarrassing question about your health and not known where to turn? Healthcare is Selfcare: The Podcast is here to help.

So, let's get started with our latest "Asking for a friend" submission.

I was mowing the lawn the other day out in direct sunlight—and I got sunburned. So it made me think...as a Black man, should I be wearing sunscreen?

Thanks for the question! Let's start with the basics.

Melanin is essentially the pigment in our skin's outer layer that gives it color. The more melanin a person has, the darker their skin tone. And while Melanin can provide some additional protection from skin cancers, estimates indicate that this protection is only the equivalent of an SPF 13 sunscreen.

The American Academy of Dermatology suggests that people, regardless of skin tone, wear a sunscreen with at least an SPF 30 on a daily basis. So, even if you are dark-complected, you still need additional protection, especially out in the sun.

The next point we want to cover is that even if you aren't getting sunburned—if you're part of the population that tans easily—there is no such thing as a "healthy" suntan. Any change in your natural

skin tone is a sign of skin damage and can result in increased risk of skin cancer. So, even if you "tan well," you still want to take care to wear a proper sunscreen.

You might think you'll get a break if it's cloudy out, right? Wrong. Studies show clouds only block out about 20% of damaging UV rays, so you still really need that SPF 30 sunscreen.

And we know you've probably heard that sunscreens with really really high SPFs aren't necessary because once you get past a "certain point" it's not doing any more...but this idea fails to take into account plain old human error. If you mis-apply or don't apply enough SPF 30 sunscreen, you may cut its effectiveness in half...meaning you are not getting the protection you really need, so using a higher SPF sunscreen allows for more user error while still supplying you with adequate protection.

So, to boil it all down—whether you are African American, tend to tan well, or it's cloudy outside, you're still going to want to put on some sunscreen—SPF 30 or more.

And even though you're "Asking for a Friend", why don't you go ahead and get yourself some sunscreen too. After all, Healthcare is selfcare.

Have an *Asking for a Friend* question? Fill out our form on HealthcareIsSelfcarePodcast.com and get your *ahem* friend's question answered!