

## ACTIVITY 2

# Myth Mash... What's the Truth?

The power of the sun is so great, it has created a number of widely circulated myths. It's time to separate fact from fiction. Check out these myths and "get real" about sunbathing and other sun-exposure legends.

**MYTH!**

*You can't get sun damage on a cloudy day.*

Don't be fooled by a cloudy day. Just because you can't see your shadow doesn't mean you're safe from the sun's damaging rays. Believe it or not, 80% of UVA and UVB rays can penetrate through clouds and fog. Even in these conditions, you can get sunburn as well as skin damage.

*Tanning is good because it protects you from sunburn.*

A tan is a sign of skin damage. Skin tans in response to damage to the skin's DNA from the sun; a tan is the skin's imperfect attempt to repair sun damage and prevent further injury.

**MYTH!**

*If I use a sunscreen with a high SPF I'm all set.*

Don't simply look for a sunscreen with SPF (*Sun Protection Factor*) of 15 or higher—you need a "broad spectrum" product that protects against both types of harmful rays, UVA and UVB. SPF indicates that the sunscreen provides protection from the sun's UVB rays. To protect against UVA rays, look for some combination of the following UVA blocking ingredients: zinc oxide, titanium dioxide, oxybenzone, avobenzone, and Mexoryl™ SX. Since no sunscreen blocks 100% of dangerous ultraviolet rays, always wear protective clothing and avoid midday sun exposure.

*Dark-skinned people don't get melanoma.*

**MYTH!**

It's accurate that dark-skinned people have a lower risk for melanoma, but they are still at risk. A very dangerous and fast-spreading skin cancer known as acral lentiginous melanoma is more common among darker-skinned people and may appear as suspicious growths in the mucous membranes, palms or soles of the feet. Darker-skinned people are also at higher risk for melanomas in the mouth. **Remember that no skin color is "safe"**—always use sunscreen and protect yourself from the sun's dangerous ultraviolet rays.

**MYTH!**

*Windows protect from all of the sun's ultraviolet rays.*

A window behaves much like sunscreen. While glass does block UVB rays, other longer-wavelength ultraviolet A radiation can get through. Which means, even indoors or in a car with the windows up, you can still tan or burn.

**MYTH!**

*A cool breeze on my skin helps prevent sunburn.*

Cool breezes, swimming and comfortable temperatures can make your skin feel cool—even in direct sunlight. But don't be fooled. You're still receiving the same dose of UV radiation as when winds are light and temperatures are hot. So, you must use sunscreen to protect yourself—even when your skin doesn't feel hot.

