

Getting toasted

When too much sun isn't a good thing

The good: Sun has amazing properties. It imparts vitamin D, increases serotonin (and thus, elevates our moods), relieves stress, and improves sleep.

The bad: Too much sun can cause heat rash; heat exhaustion (which can lead to heat-stroke, a potentially life-threatening situation); and damage to the eyes (the retina is affected, and UV light is also a factor in cataracts.)

The ugly: Skin Cancer.

The worst consequence of long-term sun exposure is skin cancer. The three kinds are: basal cell cancer, squamous cell cancer, and malignant melanoma.

Wrinkles are another byproduct of getting too much sun without proper protection. UV light also causes white and dark spots on the skin, as it damages surface cells.

What about tanning beds?

The tanning industry would like you to think their tanning beds are safe, but the UVA bulbs used are 12 times more potent than the sun. Not only does it cause more leathery, wrinkled skin, but malignant melanoma is higher in people who tan indoors.

Ask your provider for a skin cancer screening at your next physical.

 Mille Lacs Health System