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Ignoring the warnings about tanning doesn't keep you from suffering the consequences.

"You couldn't tell me anything, so I got in the tanning bed," explains Brenda Sisson, a patient at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Cosmetic Dermatology clinic , who couldn't cut her daily tanning habit. And she's not alone. The American Academy of Dermatology says about 1 million people in the United States visit a tanning salon daily.

"I went every day, because I wanted my money's worth. And I always had a pretty tan," Sisson says.

But she ended up with skin cancer because of it — squamous cell carcinoma, which are one of two types of non-melanoma skin cancers; the other is basal cell carcinoma. The AAD says more than 2 million non-melanoma skin cancers are diagnosed annually, but both are easily treated if caught early. They can also be prevented by avoiding tanning.

"There is no safe tan," says Marian Northington, M.D., UAB assistant professor of dermatology.

“Excessive tanning – either from the sun or tanning beds – will cause skin cancers, and it also is going to cause wrinkles, sun spots and a coarse texture.”

Sisson says an independent streak kept her going back to the tanning bed. “I really felt I would be able to get the cancer removed, go home and do what I wanted to do. Well, it hasn’t turned out that way,” Sisson says.

Even though her cancer has been in remission for three years, she must travel regularly from her Mississippi home to Birmingham to have her moles checked by UAB dermatologist Marian Northington, M.D.

If pale is not pretty to you, then try a faux glow, Northington says; a spray-on tan or self-tanning cream or mousse are the only safe ways to be bronzed.

“Many women complain about using self-tanner, because they say it can appear discolored. But, if you moisturize your skin, especially around your fingernails, elbows, wrists and knees, you won’t have excessive absorption of the self-tanner, and that’s what leads to the orange discoloration,” Northington says.

Northington says you can enjoy the warm summer months safely by protecting your skin with suntan lotion.

“If you don’t, you’re at risk for skin cancer, and some skin cancers are very easy to cure. But melanoma, for example, can actually kill.”

As for Sisson, she’s changed her habits.

“I use suntan lotion 365 days a year, and I stay out of the tanning bed because cancer was tough.”