

# BioMed investigators develop novel treatment for melanoma

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With summer upon us, more and more people will be heading outdoors and may be putting themselves at risk for various skin conditions which can be caused by continued exposure in the sun. Kevin Bruhn, Ph.D., and Noah Craft, M.D., Ph.D. – lead investigators at the Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center (LA BioMed) - are conducting a study that may help treat the most serious condition caused by prolonged sun exposure: skin cancer. The study will evaluate a novel immune-stimulating cream for treating melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. Initial funding for this project was provided by a grant from Edison International.

Melanoma kills approximately 8,000 Americans each year, and is a growing health problem for low-income populations and ethnic minorities. Drs. Bruhn and Craft believe that melanoma can be successfully combated with treatments that harness the body's immune system. To this end, they have obtained promising results from studies of an immune-stimulating topical cream called Imiquimod. Evidence suggests that Imiquimod might be used to therapeutically treat and perhaps even cure melanomas, especially when used in conjunction with other treatments, such as surgery.

In this study, Drs. Bruhn and Craft are examining how Imiquimod combats melanoma tumors in individual patients at the genetic level. The study will enroll at least 12 untreated melanoma patients from the surrounding communities. The cream will be applied topically to localized skin areas where the tumors exist, and patients will return after

two weeks of treatment with the cream to have their malignancies surgically removed. Patients' immunological responses to the treatment will then be assessed on a gene-by-gene level, using cutting-edge sequencing technologies. Drs. Bruhn and Craft are hoping that the knowledge gained from this study will help guide them and other researchers in their efforts to develop personalized immune therapy that saves people's lives.

In addition to the [melanoma](#) study, Drs. Bruhn and Craft suggest the following precautions be taken to help prevent [skin cancer](#), which is the most common cancer.

1. It is critical to choose the right sunscreen and use it correctly. Choose at least SPF 30. But keep in mind that higher SPFs don't offer that much more protection. Don't use SPF 60 and think you can apply it half as frequently.
2. Make sure your sunscreen protects against UV-A and UV-B.
3. Don't skimp. Apply very liberally to every part of your body exposed to the [sun](#).
4. Apply sunscreen often, at least every two hours, as it does wear off. You should apply more often if swimming or sweating.
5. Wear a hat, sunglasses, lip balm, and clothing wherever possible, especially between 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., when the sun's rays are the strongest.
6. And remember, if you have any suspicious moles or spots – especially if they change size, shape, or color, or have irregular edges or different colors, are painful, itchy, or oozing – have them looked at by a dermatologist right away.

Provided by Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute at Harbor

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