

# High factor sunscreen can decrease the risk of melanoma by 33 percent

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Melanoma. Credit: Wikimedia Commons/National Cancer Institute

A large study published by the Department of Biostatistics at the University of Oslo in the highly ranked *Journal of Clinical Oncology* found that using high factor sunscreen compared with low factor sunscreen can decrease the risk of melanoma by 33%.

## Using sunscreen does not guarantee protection

In this study sunscreen users reported more sunburn, more sunbathing vacations and use of sunbeds than those who never used sunscreen. As a result non sunscreen users had a lower risk of developing [melanoma](#) than those who used low factor sunscreen.

The Department of Biostatistics with the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Oslo have found that sunscreen with an adequate factor can reduce the risk of melanoma by over 30 percent compared with low factor sunscreen.

Melanoma is the cancer with the strongest increase in incidence in the last decade, and the incidence rates have never been as high as in 2014. Now there are about 2,000 new cases of melanoma each year in Norway.

## The paradox of sunscreen use

Earlier studies have shown mixed results, some studies found slightly increased risk of melanoma among sunscreen users.

"The explanation for this paradox is that some people use sunscreen to prolong sun exposure and acquire suntan. Moreover, many people don't apply the proper amount of sunscreen, forget to reapply and missed to apply on all exposed areas resulting in sunburn and increased risk of melanoma," said Reza Ghiasvand.

Reza Ghiasvand is a PhD candidate at The Department of Biostatistics and a member of the research group "Epidemiological Studies of Lifestyle and Chronic Diseases".

"We found that those who used sunscreen with a factor higher than 15

had a 33% lower risk of melanoma compared with those using [sunscreen](#) with a low factor."

The research group gained access to data from the NOWAC study ([site.uit.no/nowac/](http://site.uit.no/nowac/)) merged with data from the Cancer Registry of Norway. The study followed over 140,000 Norwegian women for an average of ten years.

**More information:** R. Ghiasvand et al. Sunscreen Use and Subsequent Melanoma Risk: A Population-Based Cohort Study, *Journal of Clinical Oncology* (2016). [DOI: 10.1200/JCO.2016.67.5934](https://doi.org/10.1200/JCO.2016.67.5934)

Provided by University of Oslo

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