You can most definitely pay in the future for what you do to your skin right now. Most skin cancers don’t show up for years after the dangerous exposure occurs. Some cancer causing exposure can occur in very early childhood! Not to mention the fact that sun exposure now can cause early skin aging (WRINKLES AND SUN SPOTS) and did you know that 9 out of 10 women prefer sun block over wrinkles?

Now that we have all that out of the way, let’s talk about ways to protect you from the sun.

- **AVOID SUN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY.** UVB rays are most intense between the hours of 10am-3pm. UVA rays are present from sun up to sun down (these are the rays that promote premature aging!)
- **REFLECTED LIGHT CAN MAKE MATTERS WORSE.** Many surfaces such as sand, cement, water and snow can reflect harmful radiation. Be especially careful on cloudy days when it feels like you are safe but actually up to 80% of the sun’s radiation reaches the ground!
- **COVER UP.** Sunscreen, sunscreen, sunscreen. You can’t use enough. Not all clothing provides a protective barrier from the sun’s rays! The more cover the better.
- **Did I mention sunscreen?** Remember to reapply if you towel dry, sweat or if you have been in the water. Make sure to read the bottle to determine the length of time indicated for reapply! A SPF of 30 or higher is best! Some lower SPF’s aren’t strong enough to block out damage.
- **Visit a dermatologist regularly.** Be on the lookout for any new raised growths, itchy patches, non-healing sores, or changes in moles or new colored areas that might signify a form of cancer. These should NEVER be ignored!
- **Higher altitudes can be even more dangerous.** Solar radiation increases 4-5% with every 1,000 feet above sea level.
- **CHECK YOUR MEDICATION!!** Some common medications can be very dangerous in the sun. If your medication warns against sun exposure – heed the warning! A phototoxic reaction may occur after just ONE dose of medication. The reaction almost always appears as an exaggerated sunburn (rash, redness swelling) ouch! The symptoms may appear anywhere from a few minutes to a couple of days after exposure. Talk about ruining a vacation!

The following medications should be checked into – ask your pharmacist:

- Birth Control pills, Sulfia drugs, penicillin, tetracyclines, antihistamines, and non-steroid anti-inflammatory. There are many others, so check with your pharmacist or health care provider!

**BUT COME ON – I’M GOING TO THE BEACH….I’VE GOT TO BE TAN!!!!**

Gotcha covered! Self-tanners and professional spray on tans at a tanning salon can give the perfect sun kissed look without all the damage!