Kerry Washington Promotes Sun Safety for Black People [VIDEO]

In her new documentary, *In the Sun*, the actress hopes to dispel the myth that people of color aren't at risk for skin cancer.

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One in five Americans will develop skin cancer by age 70, and more than two people die of the disease every hour. But most Black Americans tend to think that skin cancer doesn't affect dark-skinned individuals. Now actress Kerry Washington, 44, is working to combat myths prevalent in the Black community about Black skin and sun cancer as well as raise awareness about the importance of sun safety in her new documentary, In the Sun, reports People.

Along with the skin and makeup brand Neutrogena, with whom she has partnered for years, Washington is an executive producer of the film.

In the Sun follows "seven families facing extraordinary circumstances as they uncover the long-term effects of living in the sun," according to the film's official website. The documentary also introduces viewers to Shirley Chi, MD, a dermatologist who is educating and treating patients about simple, safe ways to enjoy sunlight. (You can watch the film above.)

Washington believes it's very important to address the misbeliefs Black and brown people have about skin cancer.

Growing up, older relatives would tell her to cover up in the sun so she wouldn't get dark. She would always say, "But I love my brown skin. I love it in all its colors."

Washington said that as she got older, her relationship with the sun became more about sun protection. She wants to debunk the myth that, as the saying goes, "Black don't crack" so people of color know that skin cancer is also a threat to them. She pointed out, "We know that the sun is one of the things that really causes aging in the skin," adding that it's something she has thought about throughout the years.

Skin cancer is the most common cancer worldwide. "Our misconception that we're not impacted means that oftentimes, Black people or people of color are diagnosed later with later stage in cancer, because we're not checking for it," she said. "We're not looking for it. We're not aware. And so that increases the danger."

Her newfound awareness has led her to practice sun safety with her family. Washington, a mother of two, uses spray products with SPF protection on herself and her young children.

By setting an example, she believes that kids are more likely to become lifelong users of sun protection.

For related coverage, read “How can I stay safe in the sun and protect my skin?”

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