

generally didn't burn. Today, she lives in Bedford, Nova Scotia, and has had a year to think about her cancer. She had been keeping an eye⁵ on a spot on her back, just below her armpit, for a few years when her family physician noticed it had grown. Kellett was in to see a specialist within a week, and a week after that, the dermatologist used a local anaesthetic and removed the growth, which was about the size of a baby fingernail. Her prognosis⁶—like any melanoma caught early—is very good. “I always thought I was safe—I was proud of the way I would tan—but I basically tell people that it's not worth it,” says Kellett.

- 7 Sun suppresses the immune system. It works this way: dendritic cells with amoeba-like arms fight infections and are found in tissues throughout the body. They surround and swallow the infectious agent and deliver it to T cells⁷, which **trigger** an all-out attack on the infection and also immunize the body against future assaults. The sun, however, “down regulates” dendritic cells, preventing their activation, says Bhagirath Singh, scientific director of the Institute of Infection and Immunity in London, Ontario. “Dendritic cells are really the central mechanism of the immune orchestra,” says Singh. “They control how the immune system will mobilize.”

“Gold equals healthy and white equals ill. . . . This is what pushes people to go lie down on a beach and get burned.”

- 8 Even when people put on sunscreen, they often don't put on enough to get the desired SPF⁸ rating. That's why Canadian dermatologists have upped their recommendation of SPF 15 to SPF 30, says Dr. Jason Rivers, a professor of dermatology at the University of British Columbia and former national director of the sun awareness program for the

Canadian Dermatology Association. “You can lead by example as a parent, so early education is important,” suggests Rivers. In fact, it's not all bad news. The tanning-bed industry is under mounting pressure. In March, the World Health Organization— noting that more than two million cases of skin cancer, of which 132,000 are malignant melanomas, occur worldwide each year—**urged** regulators to restrict artificial tanning with UV light to those 18 and older. Early this year, Health Canada took steps that will require manufacturers to toughen warning labels on tanning equipment.

- 9 Under a **scorching** noonday sun in Toronto's Beaches neighbourhood, Jason Remenda, 34, languidly⁹ pushes his 21-month-old son Jaydn on a swing. Remenda, a parts manager for a Japanese car manufacturer, has a rare day off. He's wearing shorts, a baseball cap, and a thick gold chain around his neck. The only SPF lotion anywhere near him is on his son. It's his first time out this year, and he never uses sunscreen. Thoughts of skin cancer cross his mind only when someone asks him about it. “I'm getting up there in age,” shrugs Remenda. “I'm going to die of some kind of cancer, right?”

- 10 A few feet away, lying in the sand along the north shore of Lake Ontario, Gillian Parker feels guilty for being caught out in the sun. The 24-year-old TV production assistant—fair-skinned, strawberry blond and freckled—usually doesn't sunbathe. Nevertheless, here she is, although she says she's watching the time carefully. “I already know that I'll probably get skin cancer,” says Parker, explaining how she's burned throughout her life. Four years ago, she fell asleep for 45 minutes in the sun and

⁵ **keep an eye on something**: to take care of something and make sure it is not harmful

⁶ **prognosis**: an opinion, based on medical experience, of the likely development of a disease or an illness

⁷ **T cell**: a kind of white blood cell that plays an important role in the human immune system

⁸ **SPF**: sun protection factor

⁹ **languidly**: moving slowly in an elegant manner, not needing energy or effort