



Take Sun-Cover in These 7 Hot Fashion Trends

Cover Up in Several Hot Fashion Items From the Spring/Summer Runway

By **KARIN HALPERIN**

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With Memorial Day -- summer's unofficial kickoff -- less than a week away, thoughts turn immediately to [barbecues](#) and ballgames, biking and boating, golf, tennis and long, languorous days at the [beach](#).

Less time is spent thinking about the damage the searing solar rays wreak on our precious skin. "It's a constant battle to educate people on the importance of adequate and reasonable sun protection," says [Dr. Doris Day](#), a New York dermatologist.

But fashion, which has always respected the elements, is here to help in an even bigger way this year. Some of the major trends culled from the runways of the spring/summer collections can offer more [sun protection](#) than ever before -- at least for women -- if worn properly and coupled with sunscreen, medical and fashion experts say.

"It's not like the usual tanks or short skirts," says Dr. Susan Chon, an assistant professor of dermatology at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, which published an article about summer fashion and sun safety in its May newsletter.

"The trends on the runway this year offer a lot more skin coverage than in previous seasons," Chon says. "The kinds of clothing choices are actually beneficial as far as your skin health goes."

Long skirts and dresses, leggings (yes, even in summer), long-sleeve tunics, huge-brimmed hats, shawls, scarves, wide belts (a [Michelle Obama](#) staple) and enormous sunglasses all stood out on the catwalks, right alongside the one-piece bathing suits, this season.

"It speaks to the idea of investment dressing," says Jen Goodkind, co-host of "[A Fashionable Life](#)," a weekly radio show on fashion, beauty, health and style that airs on WGCH 1490-AM in Greenwich, Conn., and at [fashionableliferadio.com](#).

"With the economy as it is, if you're going to wear something and make a statement," says Goodkind, who started her career as an accessories editor at Vogue, "make it big."

And big is good when it comes to [sun safety](#).

The Rules: Sunscreen, Fabrics, Colors

More than 1 million skin cancers are diagnosed each year in the United States, according to the [American Cancer Society](#). And 90 percent of nonmelanoma skin cancer and premature aging have been linked to ultraviolet radiation from the sun, according to the [Skin Cancer Foundation](#).

The summer-chic clothing shown on the runways in no way eliminates the need for [sunscreen](#), which should have a sun protection factor of at least 15.

"These fashions don't necessarily give you full protection," Chon says. "They are great just for the low-level exposure you get walking around, running errands. But there's a lot of incidental light you get, say, when you're driving. Through the glass you're going to get a lot of the longer [UVA rays](#)."

Colors and fabrics are also important in creating a protective barrier between your skin and the sun. Whether you're shopping for leggings or a bathing suit, "the tighter the weave, and the darker the fabric, the better the protection -- whatever makes you maximally uncomfortable on a hot day," Day, the New York dermatologist, says.

Some bright colors, such as orange and red, offer higher ultraviolet protection from [UVB rays](#) -- the main cause of sunburn.

Keeping these caveats in mind, here's how you can tweak seven high-fashion trends for maximum sun protection and maximum chic.

Sunglasses: Wraparounds for Botox

Choose extra-large frames, as they shield the fragile skin around the eyes from skin cancer and aging. The perfect sunglasses don't have to cost a lot but should block 99 percent to 100 percent of UV rays for maximum protection against skin cancer and cataracts, according to the American Cancer Society.



"If you can look like Jackie O and still protect that sensitive skin around your eyes, why not?" fashion guru Goodkind says.

Dermatologist Day ups the ante on the protection side at the cost of a little style. "Ideally, the best sunglasses are the ones that wrap around the side a little bit and block the sun from coming in, the ones you wouldn't be caught dead in," she says, laughing.

She recommends wraparounds, especially for her [Botox](#) patients, to keep them from squinting.

Hats: Cop an Attitude

Big, wide-brimmed hats, like the ones seen in the Marc Jacobs collection, screen the areas most exposed to the sun and so the most vulnerable to skin cancer -- the scalp, face and forehead, neck, ears and eyes.

"The head and the neck account for 80 percent of all basal skin cancer, the most common form of skin cancer," Chon says.

Huge big-brimmed hats give attitude. "They're another way to make a statement," Goodkind says. "Big-brim hats go with a spring attitude, a resort attitude, and if you're looking to add a little personal style, it's a great look."



But again, pay attention to the weave, especially if choosing a straw hat. "If the weave is loose, everything goes right through it," Chon says. "A fabric hat will probably be more opaque to light."

The MD Anderson Cancer Center recommends holding your straw hat over the ground and examining the shadow it casts. If light speckles the shadow, toss the hat.

Tunic Tops: Watch Your Bottom

They're not just cover-ups anymore, even though "any extra help you can get at the beach is great," Chon says. And if they have long sleeves, all the better.



"You get a lot of reflected light from the sand or just by sitting by the water," Chon says. "Even under an umbrella, people still get sun."

But take care not to pair a tunic with full-length pants. "It can look like pajamas," Goodkind says. Either belt it, or pair it with another runway highlight -- leggings.

"It's all about proportion," Goodkind says. "If the tunic's longer at the top, you might go with a cropped or more Capri pant at the bottom."

Leggings: A Leg-Saver

Lighter than most pants, leggings have been a fixture on the runways since their tentative comeback in 2005. "We saw a lot of those skinny, skinny pants, which translates to the legging, no question," Goodkind says.



Slip them on under a tunic or a dress, and they're a leg-saver.

Ways to Save Legs

"More women develop skin cancer on their legs than men do, probably as a result of more sun exposure over time that comes from wearing shorts and skirts," Chon says.

"Leggings are pretty helpful, but they cut off right below the knees, so you have that area still exposed, but you can wear the ones that go right to the ankle."

Long Dresses

The mini has yielded to the maxi, which, along with leggings, is another leg-saver. And they morph easily from day to night, beach to street.



"I noticed very young women with very long dresses, and I'm happy about that," Day says.

Scarves and Shawls: Beware Your Decolletage

They can be wrapped and draped around the shoulders of those long dresses, many of which, Day laments, have short-sleeves.

"You see girls wearing fabulous cotton scarves in the summertime," Goodkind says. "There's this whole trend with scarves and shawls that goes with the whole trend of wearing UGG boots, even in the summer."



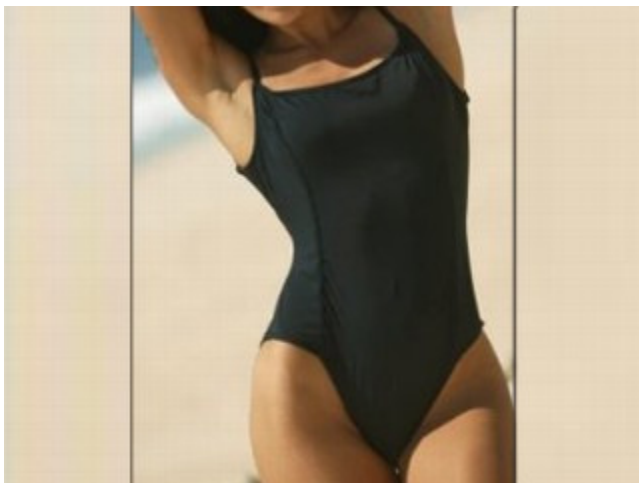
And the trend brings cover to the delicate decolletage, or neckline, "where the skin gets crinkly, and it's hard to fix," Day says.

Chon says, "Women often forget to apply sunscreen to their necks and the "V" of their chests, so that's a fashion right now that is kind of a good one for us."

1-Piece Bathing Suits: Take Cover From Sun and Sins

No bathing suit is a match for the sun's penetrating ultraviolet rays. But a one-piece at least covers the stomach and midriff and, depending on the style, the lower back and other areas where it's hard to apply sunscreen.

"It's one-piece glamour," Goodkind says. "You get better coverage from the sun, and one-pieces cover a multitude of sins that bikinis don't."



It looks as if designer Norma Kamali, who brings a line of one-piece swimsuits to Wal-Mart in June, some carrying \$20 price tags, might just give a whole new twist to the phrase less is more.

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