

UVA LOVES ROAD TRIPS

ESPECIALLY ON YOUR LEFT SIDE

That car window you're sitting behind might feel like a safe, cozy bubble from the outside world, but not all car windows are created equal, and some are basically giving the sun a VIP pass to cook your skin without you even realizing it.

Start with the windshield: it's made from laminated glass, designed to stay in one piece during a crash. That same laminated glass is also excellent at blocking UV rays, stopping about 98-100% of both UVB (the burn-causing rays) and UVA (the aging and cancer-causing rays). So your windshield is actually a strong, unsung hero when it comes to protecting your face and upper body from the sun.

But here's where it gets dangerous: the side and rear windows are usually made from tempered glass. Tempered glass is strong and shatter-resistant, but it does a poor job blocking UVA rays. It blocks most UVB (so you're less likely to burn), but lets a large amount of UVA penetrate deep into your skin, where it damages DNA and accelerates aging and skin cancer risk.



And here's the real shocker: the amount of time you spend in the car adds up to serious, hidden UV exposure. If you drive daily, especially in sunny conditions, those UVA rays are silently damaging the side of your face, neck, and arm over years. People who spend long hours behind the wheel often develop more sun damage, age spots, and even skin cancers on the left side of the face and arm (in left-hand-drive countries), all from side-window exposure.



So don't be fooled by the illusion of safety inside a car. Your windshield protects you well, but your side windows do not. If you drive a lot, treat it like any other outdoor activity: wear broad-spectrum sunscreen, consider UV-protective window film, and wear a hat and sunglasses. Your skin is still in the sun, even when you're "indoors."