

The Burning Question: *Could cell phones cause cancer?*

no

Don't believe the chatter.

IAN SMITH, MD, MEDICAL EXPERT ON VH1'S *CELEBRITY FIT CLUB* AND FORMER MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT FOR NBC NEWS

X Where's the proof?

Several large-scale, multiyear studies—including a 13-country study published this year—have not established any increased health danger as a result of typical cell phone use.

X The radiation won't hurt you.

The major worry is that the electromagnetic waves emitted by mobile phones can damage cells, especially in the brain. For this to happen, however, the waves would have to have a very specific intensity and duration—and it's virtually impossible for those parameters to be met.

X No harm, no foul.

Millions of people have used cell phones every day for many years. If they were definitely harmful, we'd already see higher brain cancer rates worldwide—which we haven't.



yes

They might, so limit your use.

JIM SEARS, MD, PEDIATRICIAN AND CO-HOST OF *THE DOCTORS*

✓ The jury is still out. A definite link between cell phones and cancer hasn't been established yet, but that doesn't mean there isn't one, so it's reasonable to be cautious.

✓ Those waves could be dangerous. More than 100 studies have shown a possible relationship between electromagnetic fields and health problems like brain cancer. The waves emitted by power lines, for example, have been linked to higher rates of cancer among people who live under them. If your DNA is damaged by waves emitted by mobile phones, those cells could one day become cancerous.

✓ Better safe than sorry. San Francisco just adopted a law requiring retailers to list the radiation levels emitted by the cell phones they sell. I hope this steers buyers toward phones with lower—perhaps safer—levels. It certainly can't hurt.

the takeaway: If you're concerned about radiation, follow Dr. Sears's example and use a headset, Bluetooth earpiece (which emits less radiation than your phone), or speakerphone—or just text.