



## *Skin Health*

A new theme for Health Nurse Healthy Nation – skin health! We want to give you some tips on maintaining healthy skin!

Don't have time for intensive skin care? You can still pamper yourself by acing the basics:

### **Sun Safety**

The sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can damage your skin in as little as 15 minutes. Follow these recommendations to help protect you and your family.

#### Shade

- Reduce your risk of skin damage and skin cancer by seeking shade
- Use sunscreen or wear protective clothing when you're outside

#### Clothing

- Long-sleeved shirts and long pants and skirts can provide protection
- Clothes made from tightly woven fabric offer the best protection.
- A wet shirt offers *much less* UV protection than a dry one
- Darker colors may offer more protection than lighter colors
- Some clothing, certified under international standards, has ultraviolet protection factor
- A typical T-shirt has an SPF rating lower than 15. Use other protection, as well.

#### Hat

- Wear a hat with a brim all the way around to shade face, ears, and the back of the neck
- Tightly woven fabric, such as canvas, works best to protect your skin from UV rays.
- Straw hats with holes do let sunlight through
- If you wear a baseball cap, you should also protect your ears and the back of your neck

#### Sunglasses

- Sunglasses protect your eyes from UV rays and reduce the risk of cataracts
- Sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays offer the best protection
- Wrap-around sunglasses work best. They block UV rays from sneaking in from the side.

“Be good to your skin. You'll wear it every day for the rest of your life.” – Renée Rouleau.

#### References

Mayo Clinic. (2017). Healthy Lifestyle: Adult Health. Retrieved from <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/skin-care/art-20048237?pg=1>

Salon Skincare. (2015). 10 Inspirational skincare quotes. Retrieved from <https://salonskincareblog.wordpress.com/2015/09/01/10-inspiration-skincare-quotes/>

Did you know men are more likely to get skin cancer than women? (Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2017). We want to give you some tips on maintaining healthy skin with UV and sun protection.

### **Protect yourself from the sun**

One of the most important ways to take care of your skin is to protect it from the sun. A lifetime of sun exposure can cause wrinkles, age spots, and other skin problems — as well as increase the risk of skin cancer.

#### Sunscreen

- Use broad spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15 before you go outside, even on slightly cloudy or cool days.
- Don't forget to put a thick layer on all parts of exposed skin.
- Get help for hard-to-reach places like your back.
- Sunscreen works best when combined with other options to prevent UV damage.
- Check the expiration on your sunscreen.

**How sunscreen works.** Most sun protection products work by absorbing, reflecting, or scattering sunlight. They contain chemicals that interact with the skin to protect it from UV rays. All products do not have the same ingredients; if your skin reacts badly to one product, try another one or call a doctor.

- **SPF.** Sunscreens are assigned a sun protection factor (SPF) number that rates their effectiveness in blocking UV rays. Higher numbers indicate more protection. You should use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15.
- **Reapplication.** Sunscreen wears off. Put it on again if you stay out in the sun for more than two hours and after swimming, sweating, or toweling off.
- **Expiration date.** Check the sunscreen's expiration date. Sunscreen without an expiration date has a shelf life of no more than three years, but its shelf life is shorter if it has been exposed to high temperatures.
- **Cosmetics.** Some makeup and lip balms contain some of the same chemicals used in sunscreens. If they do not have at least SPF 15, don't use them by themselves.

#### SPF like a boss!

- Keep the sunscreen by the toothpaste.
- Reapply sunscreen often, especially after swimming or exercise.
- Check off body parts like a to-do list, including your neck, between toes, and along the hairline.
- Apply in circles and be sure to overlap.
- Save the lip gloss for after dark. Try a lip balm with SPF (Hodes, 2017)

Keep calm, and SPF ON! Remember, don't fry. Reapply J (Thanks to the reminder wristband my daughter's friend gave me that she got from her dermatologist following a skin cancer screening!)

#### Reference

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017x). Skin cancer: Sun safety: Tips for men.

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017x). Skin cancer: Sun safety. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic\\_info/sun-safety.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/sun-safety.htm)

Hodes, K. (2017, May) Fashion + Beauty: Out of the shadows. *Women's Health Magazine*, p. 45-50. Rodale International.

Our diet is related to skin health. We are always concerned with the nutrition and intake of our patients. It is crucial to be just as mindful with ourselves. We can combat the sun damage we encounter this summer, and PREVENT future damage, with a few convenient tweaks in our daily eating habits.

#### **Foods That Boost Natural Sun Protection:**

1. Citrus fruits (lemon, limes, oranges, grapefruit) are high in Vitamin C.
2. Carrots contain beta-carotene - protects skin against free radical damage.
3. Strawberries- powerful combination of antioxidants and vitamin C. They contain tannins that can help reduce the sting of a sunburn. For sun burn home remedy: grab a few strawberries and mash them up. Then slather them on your sunburn for natural relief. Rinse off your skin after a few minutes
4. Green tea- When you sip a cup of green tea, your body is getting catechins, which have disease-preventing properties and protect against sunburn inflammation and long-term UV radiation damage. Green tea also has tannic acid in it, which helps calm sunburn pain, and antioxidants called EGCGs. University of Wisconsin study showed EGCGs stopped genetic damage in human skin cells exposed to UV light.
5. Pomegranates have been part of a healing tradition that dates all the way back to ancient Egypt! The seeds in this delicious exotic fruit are rich in antioxidants. Pomegranates also contain ellagic acid, which can help protect your skin from cell damage induced by the sun's UVA and UVB rays.
6. Almonds are one of the best sources of vitamin E, which protects and repairs the skin from sunlight. Almonds also contain quercetin, which has been shown to protect against UV damage and the wrinkle-causing breakdown of collagen.
7. Red grapes- phytonutrients in grapes can slow down the formation of destructive reactive oxygen species (ROS) that form in skin cells, which has been linked to sun damage, skin cancer and cell death. Grapes also contain proanthocyanidins and other polyphenols found in the grape's seeds that inhibit skin cancer induced by UV rays. Grapes also contain quercetin, a study published by Toxicology and Applied Pharmacology found that quercetin was responsible for

lessening oxidative DNA damage caused by UVB exposure, and was able to help protect the skin from related inflammation. Bonus!

8. Green lettuce, spinach, kale, and swiss chard, are excellent sources of the antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin. These have been shown to halt cell growth prompted by UV light in animal studies.

9. Tomatoes- When you eat tomatoes, you are adding lycopene to your diet. Lycopene is a carotenoid and antioxidant that neutralizes the free radicals produced from too much sun, and minimizes any inflammatory response to UV damage by your body, according to Mayo Clinic. This effect is magnified when you eat processed tomatoes (cooked or smashed into foods such as ketchup, tomato paste, or tomato juice), which makes the lycopene more bioavailable.

10. Watermelon- This staple summer fruit is also high in lycopene and contains 40% more lycopene than tomatoes!

11. Turmeric- Ayurvedic and traditional Chinese medicine have used turmeric for centuries due to its strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. It's a "superstar" of superfoods.

12. Flax seed- Omega 3 fatty acids in flax seeds can protect your skin from sunburn, reduce additional inflammation if sunburn occurs, and fight against skin cancer. According to the National Institute of Health, flaxseed oil can protect your skin against UV rays and keep your skin moisturized so it won't dry out, as well as fight against skin cancer. Try adding 2 tablespoons to your next smoothie.

Incorporating more of these foods into your daily routine will make a difference in your skin health! Remember, these need to be lifestyle changes, not a temporary diet. Taking one day a week to prepare some healthy snack for the rest of the work week will make eating healthy much more convenient and easier to maintain over time. These foods and other healthy alternatives will allow us to perform at our best for ourselves and our patients!

Let's tackle the challenge together! Small changes in our personal care plans will lead to successful outcomes. We must practice what we teach.

### **Sun Damaged, Stressed Skin**

Here are some tips, treatment options and ideas on repairing sun damaged or stressed skin.

Most early damage to the skin is cosmetic and is caused by the increased production of melanocytes. The extra melanin can make your skin look tanned or darker after sun exposure. These superficial darkened areas and fine lines can be reduced with natural skin treatments. For minimal sun stress, try getting creative this June and experiment with some home remedies:

**Natural Honey Mask** - Apply natural dark honey to your face and other exposed areas of the body as a rejuvenating mask and cleanser. Spread a thin layer onto the skin and let it sit for 20 to 30 minutes. Wash off the honey with warm water and pat the skin dry. Honey, particularly the

dark varieties, contains high levels of antioxidants that help reduce free-radical damage on the skin due to exposure to the sun, pollution and stress. They work by improving texture, tone and moisture in the skin.

**Homemade Toner** - Make a home-made toner by mixing a tbsp. of freshly squeezed lemon juice in a half-cup of distilled water. Apply to your skin with a cotton pad and let dry. Leave the toner on the skin or wash off with warm water after 30 minutes to one hour, if desired. Lemon juice contains natural glycolic and alpha hydroxy acids that help to gently exfoliate the superficial layer of skin cells to improve rough skin texture and uneven complexion due to sun damage.

**Photoaging** - Excessive exposure to the sun early in life can make a person look older than he or she really is. This premature wrinkling and skin damage from sun exposure is called photoaging. Photoaging, unlike natural aging, results in coarse, dry skin; freckling and skin discoloration; leathery skin; and deep wrinkles.

### **Treatment options for sun-damaged skin**

The best way to minimize the effects of photoaging depends on:

- Age, overall health, and medical history
- Severity of skin damage
- Type of skin damage
- Tolerance for specific medications, procedures, or therapies
- Subject opinion/preference

*\*Moles, scars, and birthmarks* change with age. Although there are many anti-aging creams on the market, advanced signs of aging and sun damage may require more invasive dermatological procedures, including the following:

- **Botulinum toxin type A.** An injection of botulinum toxin (a complex type of protein) into specific muscles will immobilize those muscles, preventing them from forming wrinkles and furrows. The use of botulinum will also soften existing wrinkles.
- **Chemical peels.** Chemical peels are often used to minimize sun-damaged skin, irregular pigment, and superficial scars. The top layer of skin is removed with a chemical application to the skin. By removing the top layer, the skin regenerates, often improving its appearance.
- **Soft tissue augmentation or filler injections.** A soft tissue filler is injected beneath the skin to replace the body's natural collagen that has been lost. There are multiple different kinds of fillers available. Filler is generally used to treat wrinkles, scars, and facial lines.
- **Dermabrasion.** Dermabrasion may be used to minimize small scars, minor skin surface irregularities, surgical scars, and acne scars. As the name implies, dermabrasion involves removing the top layers of skin with an electrical machine that abrades the skin. As the skin heals from the procedure, the surface appears smoother and fresher.

A gentler version of dermabrasion, called microdermabrasion, uses small particles passed through a vacuum tube to remove aging skin and stimulate new skin growth. This procedure works best on mild to moderate skin damage and may require several treatments.

- **Intense pulsed light (IPL) therapy.** IPL therapy is different from laser therapy in that it delivers multiple wavelengths of light with each pulse (lasers deliver only one wavelength).

IPL is a type of nonablative\* therapy.

- **Laser skin resurfacing.** Laser skin resurfacing uses high-energy light to burn away damaged skin. Laser resurfacing may be used to minimize wrinkles and fine scars. A newer treatment option is called nonablative\* resurfacing, which also uses a laser as well as electrical energy without damaging the top layers of skin.

\*Nonablative dermatological procedures do not remove the epidermal layer of the skin. Ablative procedures remove the top layers of skin.

Aside from obvious cosmetic damage to skin, remember to check your skin for signs of symptoms of skin cancer. Melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers *can be invasive*. As well as growing across the surface of the skin, tumors may grow down through the layers of the dermis. If the tumor grows through the wall of a blood or lymph vessel, the cancer may metastasize.

Skin cancer is easier to treat successfully when it is caught at an early stage.

- Make sure you check your entire body as skin cancers can sometimes occur in parts of the body not exposed to the sun, for example soles of the feet, between fingers and toes and under nails.
- Undress completely and make sure you have good light.
- Use a mirror to check hard to see spots, like your back and scalp, or get a family member, partner or friend to check it for you.

There are three main types of skin cancer - melanoma (including nodular melanoma), basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma.

**Melanoma:** Most deadly form of skin cancer. If left untreated can spread to other parts of the body. Appears as a new spot or an existing spot that changes in color, size or shape. Can appear on skin not normally exposed to the sun.

**Nodular melanoma:** Grows quickly. Looks different from common melanomas. Raised and even in color. Many are red or pink and some are brown or black. They are firm to touch and dome-shaped. After a while they begin to bleed and crust.

**Basal cell carcinoma:** Most common, least dangerous form of skin cancer. Red, pale or pearly in color, appears as a lump or dry, scaly area. May ulcerate or fail to completely heal. Grows slowly, usually on areas that are often exposed to the sun.

**Squamous cell carcinoma:** A thickened, red scaly spot that may bleed easily, crust or ulcerate. Grows over some months, usually on areas often exposed to the sun. More likely to occur in people over 50 years of age.

**A is for Asymmetry** - Look for spots that lack symmetry. That is, if a line was drawn through the middle, the two sides would not match up.

**B is for Border** - A spot with a spreading or irregular edge (notched).

**C is for Color** - Blotchy spots with a number of colors such as black, blue, red, white and/or

gray.

**D is for Diameter** - Look for spots that are getting bigger.

Prevention is the best way to reduce the risk of skin cancer and sun damage to skin. Stay safe this summer and protect your skin!

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