

To Our Health...

Information for Improving Our Health / Prepared by Jill Peterson, RN, BSN, Nurse Consultant

A Healthy Tan?

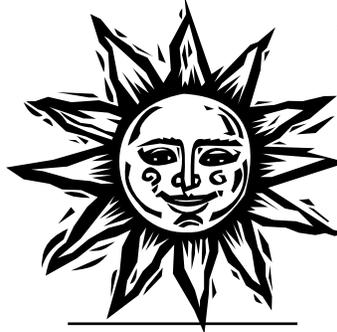
Though many people associate getting a tan with a healthy glow, a tan is actually the body's response to harmful ultraviolet ray (UV). With exposure to sunlight, the skin's uppermost layer (epidermis) thickens and pigment-producing skin cells (melanocytes) increase the production of pigment (melanin) which gives the skin color - a tan. Melanin, a naturally protective substance, absorbs the energy of ultraviolet rays and prevents the rays from penetrating deeper into the tissues.

Lots of people can't relate to the idea of skin cancer but they can relate to wrinkles, and unsafe exposure to the sun is the major cause of both.

So how can we safely enjoy fun in the sun?

- Use sunscreen - See Sunscreen tips.
- Wear sunglasses with UV protection.
- Wear a hat with at least a 4 inch brim.
- Tightly woven clothes reduce the penetration of UV rays.

- Look for a SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of at least 15. An SPF of 15 gives you 15 times your natural protection. So if you typically burn after 10 minutes in the sun, an SPF of 15 will buy you 150 minutes outside.
- Purchase sunscreens labeled "broad - spectrum". They offer you protection from UV-B rays (ultraviolet B) responsible for stinging sunburns and UV-A rays (ultraviolet A) that cause wrinkles.
- Water - resistant formulas are the longest acting remaining effective for 40 - 80 minutes underwater or for those of you who really work up a sweat.
- Apply sunscreen before you go out in the sun. Applied 30 minutes prior to exposure, allows it time to penetrate.



Drugs that cause photosensitivity

Benadryl
Compazine
Diuril
Enduron
Haldol
Hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ)
Oral antidiabetics
Phenergan
Sulfa drugs - Bactrim, Septra
Tetracycline
Thorazine
Tofranil

These drugs can cause an extreme sensitivity to the sun. Make sure while on these meds to wear sunscreen, don't stay out in the sun too long, stay fully clothed, and continue these precautions for 2 days after completing the prescription.

- Don't purposely lie out in the sun to get a tan and avoid tanning beds. Any tan equals sun damage which ultimately equals an increase risk of skin cancer and wrinkling.
- Completely shield babies from the sun rays. As children reach toddler-age and older, protect with sunscreen, proper clothing, and moderate sun exposure. Some researchers believe that experiencing severe sunburn, especially during childhood, can increase the risk of melanoma, the most deadly skin cancer.
- Know that the UV rays are most hazardous between 10 am and 3 pm.
- Eat your fruits and vegetables. Preliminary studies suggest that antioxidants, such as vitamin C and E, applied topically may limit skin damage, which is why you may see these ingredients in sunscreens. There is also new evidence that ingesting antioxidants can also safeguard skin. Another important reason to include leafy greens and yellow-orange fruits and vegetables in your diet.

- Reapply any sunscreen at least every 2 hours.
- Be generous when applying sunscreen. Apply an ounce (a shot glassful), with particular attention to ears, nose, the tops of feet, and balding heads.
- Sunscreens have a shelf life of 2 years so replace accordingly. One source said if a bottle of sunscreen lasts you more than one summer, you aren't using enough.

Sunscreen Tips



- Make it a habit of wearing sunscreen even on a cloudy day, clouds are not a good UV filter. Snow, water, and sand reflect sunlight, magnifying the amount of UV light that reaches the skin.
- Don't forget to wear lip balm with a sunscreen. Those of you prone to cold sores know that after getting your lip sunburned, a cold sore will form.



First Aid for Sunburns

- At the first sign of tingling or redness get out of the sun.

allow the air to assist in healing.

Call for medical attention if:

- Apply cool compresses or a cool bath. Baking soda in the water may help relieve the pain.
- My favorite treatment is aloe vera. I keep a bottle of aloe vera gel in the refrigerator or cooler, to help take the heat out.
- OTC pain medications - Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen.
- Don't apply petroleum jelly, ointment or butter to the sunburn. They make the symptoms worse and do not

- there are signs of shock such as faintness, dizziness, rapid pulse, rapid breathing, or clammy skin.
- the person complains of eye pain or eyes are sensitive to the light.
- there are symptoms of nausea, fever, or chills.
- the sunburn is very severe with swelling and pain.

HEAT

Warm weather can be wonderful but sometimes you can overdo it in the heat. These following heat-related illnesses can be brought on by hot, humid weather, and dehydration:

HEAT CRAMPS are painful contractions usually in the hamstring (the muscles at the back of the calves). They are caused by heat, dehydration, and poor conditioning. Rest, a cool environment, and drinking water will help to relieve the cramps.

HEAT EXHAUSTION is the result of feeling exhausted, excessive heat, and dehydration. The signs include: paleness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, fainting, and an increased temperature (100-101 degrees). Rest and water along with ice packs, and a cool environment (fan blowing on the person) will help with mild heat exhaustion. A more severely heat exhausted person may need IV fluids, especially if they aren't able to drink due to vomiting.

HEAT STROKE is the most severe form of heat illness. These people have warm, flushed skin, and *do not sweat*. Whether exercise-related or not, a person with heat stroke usually has a very high temperature (106 degrees or higher), and may be delirious, unconscious, or have a seizure. *This is a medical emergency - Call 911.*

To prevent heat-related illness, stay well hydrated—water is the best—and be sensible about exerting yourself in the hot weather.

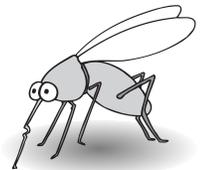


HOW HOT IS IT?

In a recent Lincoln Journal Star column... There is an old rule that the ambient temperature in degrees Fahrenheit is equal to the number of cricket chirps in 15 seconds plus 40. Thus, if a cricket is heard to chirp 112 times in one minute (28 times in 15 seconds), the temperature is about 68 degrees Fahrenheit. A cricket's chirp is usually good within a degree or two.

Tips from Andrew Spielman, Mosquito Man

- There is some evidence that eating bananas and food high in Vitamin B1 (cereal, pasta, whole grains, meat, fish, and dried beans) protect against mosquito bites.
- Look for an insect repellent with a 34% concentration of DEET. For children buy repellents with only a 10% concentration.
- Movement is a visual stimulant to attract mosquitoes- swatting and swinging is a good way to get them to swarm in your direction.
- The best way to reduce the itch is to hold the bite under hot water until the water is too hot to continue.



GAZPACHO

- 1 large ripe tomato
- 1/2 cup green pepper - coarsely chopped
- chives
- 4 teaspoons wine vinegar
- 1 onion - coarsely chopped
- 2 large sprigs of parsley
- small sprig of dill
- dash of tabasco
- 1/2 cucumber - coarsely chopped
- 1 carrot - coarsely chopped
- 4 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup tomato juice
- 1 - 2 cloves of garlic
- 1/4 cup of fresh basil
- 1/2 cup lemon juice

Blend coarsely in the blender. Chill for several hours. Serve in soup bowls with croutons. This is a great way to use produce from your garden, stay cool, and get a large share of your daily requirement of veggies in.

Sources include Better Homes & Gardens 7/2001, Merck Manual, Web.MD. and Cooking Light 7/2000 & 7/2001



Region V Services

1430 South St., Ste. 203
Lincoln, NE 68502
402.471.6400

Jill Peterson, Nurse Consultant
jmpetersonrn@yahoo.com