

Health Tips

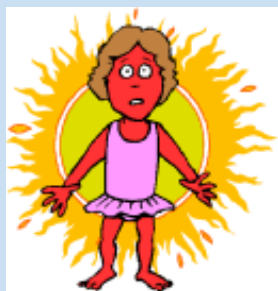
Your Good Health Information From eDocAmerica

with

Dr. D



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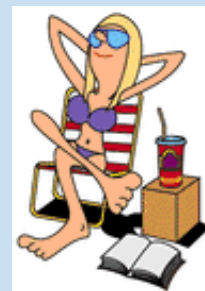
Health Tip : Summer Sun Safety

With the longer, warmer days of summer, many people increase their exposure to the sun, increasing the risk of sunburn and sun-related damage to the skin.

Consider a few alarming facts related to the dangers of ultraviolet (U.V.) light exposure:

- U.V. radiation is the most important environmental factor in the development of skin cancer.
- More than 1 million cases of basal cell or squamous cell cancer will be diagnosed annually.
- One blistering sunburn can double a child's lifetime risk of developing skin cancer.
- Concrete, sand, water, and snow reflect 85% to 90% of the sun's UV rays which can cause sun injury, even without direct sun exposure.
- You can sunburn even on a cloudy day.
- In the summer at mid-day, sunburn of unprotected skin can occur with as little as 30 minutes of exposure.

Preventing sunburn and skin damage. Skin cancer and sunburn are largely preventable problems when sun protective practices and behaviors are consistently applied and utilized.



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The American Cancer Society has offered the following recommendations to avoid sunburn and reduce the risk of skin cancer:

- When possible, avoid outdoor activities during the hours between 10 AM and 4 PM, when the sun's rays are the strongest.
- Always wear a broad-spectrum (protection against both UVA and UVB) sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or higher.
- Be sure to reapply sunscreen frequently, especially after swimming, perspiring heavily or drying off with a towel.
- Wear a hat with a 4-inch brim all around because it protects areas often exposed to the sun, such as the neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose and scalp.
- Wear clothing to protect as much skin as possible. Long-sleeved shirts, long pants, or long skirts are the most protective. Dark colors provide more protection than light colors by preventing more UV rays from reaching your skin. A tightly woven fabric provides greater protection than loosely woven fabric.
- To protect your eyes from sun damage, wear sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB radiation.
- Consider wearing cosmetics and lip protectors with an SPF of at least 15 to protect your skin year-round.
- Swimmers should remember to regularly reapply sunscreen. UV rays reflect off water and sand, increasing the intensity of UV radiation and making sun protection especially important.
- Some medications, such as antibiotics, can increase your skin's sensitivity to the sun. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about the medicines you take and learn more about extra precautions.
- Children need extra protection from the sun. One or two blistering sunburns before the age of 18 dramatically increases the risk of skin cancer. Encourage children to play in the shade, wear protective clothing, and apply sunscreen regularly.



Treatment of mild to moderate sunburn. Despite your best preventive efforts, should a sunburn occur, home treatment measures will provide some relief from a mild to moderate sunburn. The sensation of pain and heat usually lasts around 48 hours. An ibuprofen product (such as Advil, Motrin, or Nuprin) started early and continued for two days can reduce discomfort. Take frequent cool baths and apply cool moist cloths to sunburned areas. Soothing lotions,

such as aloe vera, or topical steroids, such as 1% hydrocortisone cream, may help with sunburn pain. Drink extra water to replace the fluid lost into the swelling of sunburned skin. Peeling usually occurs in about a week. Applying a moisturizing cream to the peeling skin will help with discomfort. Should blistering occur, leave the blisters intact until they burst. Then trim off the dead skin with fine scissors and apply an antibiotic ointment. Wash it off and reapply it twice daily for three days. Many people make the common mistake of applying petroleum jelly or other ointments to sunburn. These serve only to contain the heat associated with the sunburn and prolong the discomfort. Also, avoid the use of first aid creams or sprays that contain benzocaine on burns because they can cause an allergic rash. Seek medical attention for severe sunburn, particularly if associated with extensive blistering.

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