

Learn to Be Sun Smart and Still Look Great

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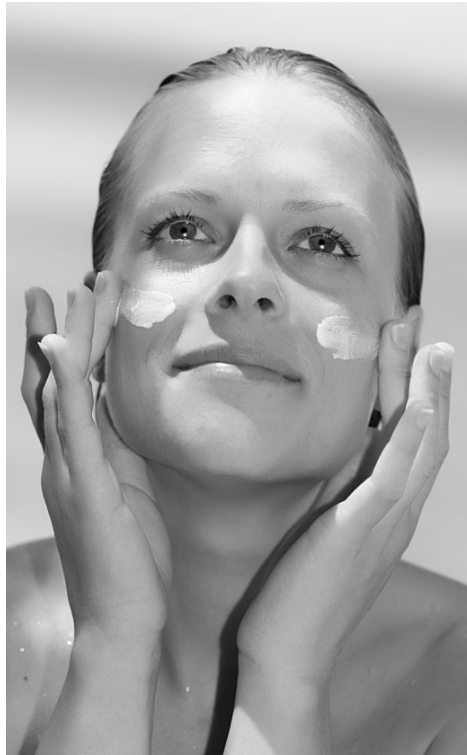
As summer temperatures continue to rise, more and more layers of clothing are removed and the daily quest for outdoor activities continues: golf, baseball games, the zoo, the water park and the pool. Yet heading outdoors without proper sun protection can lead to sunburn, premature aging and even skin cancer. People associate a suntan with good health, youth, good looks and vitality. So how can you have it all? A nice skin tone without increasing the risk of skin cancer, is that possible? Yes, it is.

Protecting Your Skin

Let's talk about the facts. First, second and third, sun protection. Today sun block is a must; we all know that there is no excuse for not wearing sun protection. There are two types of sun protection products: sunscreens and sunblocks. Sunscreens absorb the ultraviolet radiation, reducing the amount of radiation that penetrates the skin. Sunblocks physically block the ultraviolet radiation from penetrating the skin. There are two types of ultraviolet (UV) light. UVA, called the aging ray, is the one that weakens the skin and causes wrinkles and premature aging. UVB, called the burn ray, is the one that produces skin cancer. Sun blocks and sunscreens are rated with a SPF number; this refers to Sun Protection Factor.

What is SPF? This indicates the time a person can be exposed to sunlight before getting a sunburn. For instance, someone would burn after 10 minutes without sun protection. Using a sun block with SPF 15 would protect a person for 150 minutes after applying the sun protection - that means the time in minutes multiplied by the SPF number of the product. How to choose a sun block? First learn to read the labels. Look for Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 20 for adults and 30 for kids. Look for evidence of broad-spectrum protection (that means against UVA and UVB rays), evidence of water resistance and product stability, presence of Zinc Oxide or Titanium Dioxide in the component of the product, and finally make sure the product has FDA approval.

In addition to using sun block, other measures of protection should be exercised. Plan your outdoor activities to avoid the sun's strongest rays. As a general rule, avoid the sun



between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM, wear protective covering such as broad brimmed hats, and wear sunglasses that provide 100% UV ray protection. You can buy clothing with SPF; it is available through catalogs and the internet. I like to order the beach clothes for my family from www.coolibar.com.

What about tanning beds? The answer is NO. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourage people to avoid use of tanning beds and sun lamps. Tanning beds emit mainly UVA rays that are two to three times more powerful than UVA rays emitted from the sun. Over time, the effects of too much UVA exposure can lead to eye damage, immune system changes, cataracts, wrinkles, premature aging and skin cancer. Tanning beds give the appearance of leathery skin; this is not a pretty look. The AAD states that a suntan is the skin's response to an injury caused by the UV rays, never forget this.

Getting a Little Color

Understanding all these facts, getting the right sun block and getting your skin protected, how can you look tan? If you would like a little more color in your skin, a safer alternative is to use one of the many self-tanning lotions

available today on the market. According to the AAD, self-tanning lotions contain Dihydroxyacetone (DHA) which is a colorless sugar that interacts with the top dead cells of the skin (stratum corneum of the epidermis). As the sugar interacts with these skin cells, a color change occurs. The color change usually lasts from three to eight days depending on the frequency of bathing. Many of the products available today also contain moisturizers, so not only do you get some color but you also hydrate your skin. Some products use Erythrulose combined with DHA. Erythrulose works identically to DHA but develops more slowly, so the two products combined may produce a longer lasting tan.

First time users of self-tanning products should apply them to a small patch of the skin and wait for 24 hours before a full body application, since in a few cases contact dermatitis has been observed. These products can be applied at home in the form of gels, lotions, mousses, sprays and wipes. Best results are obtained when applied after exfoliating and cleaning the skin. Bathing and swimming should be avoided until product sets in; this may take up to six hours. Wash your hands immediately after applying these products since pigmentation of the hands occurs. Professional application options are available from spas and salons in the form of airbrush tan, mystic tan or spray tan. DHA based sunless tanning has been recommended by the skin cancer organization.

Other products include Cathaxin which is a tanning pill that is most commonly used as a color additive in certain foods. It has not been approved by the FDA as a tanning agent. After Cathaxin is ingested, it is deposited throughout the body, including the layer of fat below the skin which turns orange-brown in color. This pill has been linked to various side effects. The FDA has issued warnings concerning its use.

Enjoy the beautiful weather and look great but *learn to be sun smart*. For more information please visit www.aad.org.

Skin Diagnostics Laser and Rejuvenation offers Medical and Laser treatments to improve Sun damage. Call us for an appointment at 513-631-0059 or visit our website at www.cincinnatiaskinlaser.com.

