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# HEALTHY SUN PRACTICES

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## KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE SUN

The sun produces three types of ultraviolet light, two of which are important to understand -- UVA and UVB. UVA is responsible for deep skin wrinkling and possibly the worst kind of skin cancer - melanoma. UVA rays are out all day and penetrate windows, clothes and any sunscreen that is not full spectrum. For this reason, it is important to use sunscreen throughout the day and still plan on getting some afternoon sun. UVB causes burning and also basal cell carcinoma and cataracts. UVB also has an important health benefit – it reacts with cholesterol in the skin to produce Vitamin D.

One of the most important benefits of exposure to the sun is the production of Vitamin D. We are learning more all the time about the value and function of Vitamin D to our health. Some of the conditions associated with Vitamin D deficiency are:

- » Depression
- » Cancers: colon, breast, prostate and skin cancer
- » Infertility
- » Poor tooth development and cavities
- » Osteomalacia
- » Osteoporosis
- » Premenstrual Syndrome
- » Skin conditions – psoriasis and eczema
- » Rickets
- » SAD – seasonal affect disorder
- » Thyroid and adrenal disorders

Sunscreens as low as SPF 8 have been shown to block the production of Vitamin D. Read on to find out how to be in the sun safely, about the dangers of commercial sunscreen and learn about some good, healthy sunscreen alternatives. For more information on the sun, click here [http://www.ecolani.com/the\\_sun.htm](http://www.ecolani.com/the_sun.htm)

## THE DANGERS OF SUNSCREEN

According to the July/August 2004 issue of The Ecologist, the respected British periodical, sunscreen can be dangerous for our health and the health of our planet. The chemicals used in commercial sunscreen tend to not only irritate the skin, but the newest research suggests that these chemicals mimic estrogen and persist in the environment and in the body.

Estrogenic chemicals are in most sunscreens. These synthetic compounds, referred to as environmental estrogens, can act like estrogens, the hormones that control female characteristics. Many can block or cancel out hormone actions and are called anti-estrogens or anti-androgens (the male hormones). Other compounds can both mimic and block hormones. Still others known as environmental disrupters or modulators can alter how natural hormones and their protein receptors are

made, are broken down and perform. And to complicate matters even more, many chemicals have distinct effects in different species and organs and at different developmental stages.

These and other foreign substances have been associated with health and reproductive problems in wildlife and laboratory animals. Some believe these environmental compounds can affect human health, development and reproduction in similar ways, although this has not yet been scientifically proven.

When applied to breast cancer cells in vitro (test tubes) the following chemicals also increased cancer cell proliferation/growth:

- » Benzophenone-3
- » Homosalate
- » Octyl Methoxycinnamate
- » 4 Methyl-benzylidene camphor (4-MBC)
- » Ocryl-dimethyl-PABA

To find out more about endocrine disruption and chemical compounds click here. <http://e.hormone.tulane.edu/>

## SAFE SUN PRACTICES

**REAPPLY SUNSCREENS FREQUENTLY!** Sweating & swimming will dilute any sunscreen's effectiveness. Next to inadequate SPF (or a total lack of protection), the failure to reapply consistently is the single biggest cause of burning! Under intense sun conditions, reapply at least every hour.

**DON'T RUB IT IN!** Research proves that the traditional method of rubbing sun care products quickly into the skin results in the rapid absorption of the lotion. This leaves the outermost layers of skin with far less SPF than you may require. DAB your sunscreen onto sun-sensitive areas, such as the nose and forehead -- anywhere the bone is close to thin skin -- and then LAY the sunscreen on the rest of your body with a light motion. Wait 60 seconds before you gently smooth the sunscreen on, spreading it evenly onto the skin.

**TAKE FREQUENT SHADE BREAKS!** Rather than sun-blasting your skin continuously for extended periods, take frequent shade breaks of 15 minutes or longer. Let your skin cool down & recover from the sun's bombardment, about once every hour -- you can handle more sun more safely this way!

**KEEP SKIN MOISTURIZED WHILE IN THE SUN!** Dry skin is far more likely to burn than moist skin, and moist skin tans faster, deeper, and your tan will last much longer.

**NEVER EXPOSE BURNED SKIN TO MORE SUN!** Heal your skin before resuming tanning. Burned skin will not tan -- it will only get worse. Keep burned skin cool, and try to minimize sweating through burned skin, to minimize chances of blistering. Never put waterproof sunscreens on sun-sensitive, pink, or burned skin -- the waxes in waterproof products will interfere with your skin's normal functions and with the healing process.

**BE CAREFUL ON VACATION!** Gradually get your skin accustomed to increased levels of sun. A short time in the sun on the first day (with shade breaks), with progressively longer exposure on subsequent days works best. You're far more likely to burn with fair skin that hasn't seen strong sunlight for a while. When you have a base tan established, your skin is producing enough melanin to supplement the protection of your sunscreen. Extend your sun exposure slowly, 5 or 10 minutes if your skin is fair may be all that you can handle the first day. When in question, use a higher SPF and get out of the sun.

**CONDITION YOUR SKIN BEFORE AND AFTER SUN EXPOSURE!** Your skin should be hydrated, nourished, and healthy before any extensive sun exposure. After long sun exposure, you need to replenish the moisture and nutrients your skin has used while coping with the sun.

**COOL IT!** If your skin overheats, it frequently reacts with a classic heat rash (red bumps & blotches -- itchy too). This can quickly lead to easy burning, and it can spoil whatever great tan you may already have. Take those occasional shade breaks! Cool off in the water frequently, and REAPPLY your sunscreen! Avoid waterproof, sport block, sweat proof, & baby block

type sunscreens if spending extended periods in the sun. The petroleum bases in these products can contribute to skin overheating quickly!

For more information go to [www.ecolani.com/the\\_sun.htm](http://www.ecolani.com/the_sun.htm)

## HEALTHY SUNSCREENS

The following products are low in skin irritants and don't use perfumes or petroleum-based polymers. In general, products that use mineral blocks, such as titanium and zinc oxide, tend to be healthier and less irritating.

We have found the Ecolani line of products, produced in Berkeley, to be particularly good.

[www.ecolani.com](http://www.ecolani.com) Ecolani

[www.aubrey-organics.com](http://www.aubrey-organics.com) Aubrey Organics

[www.aveda.com](http://www.aveda.com) Aveda

[www.drhauschka.com](http://www.drhauschka.com) Dr. Hauschka