

THE BENEFITS AND HAZARDS OF THE SUN

It is important to protect your skin from overexposure to ultraviolet light. However, it is also necessary to get adequate sun exposure for your body to produce vitamin D.




The sun produces three types of ultraviolet light, two of which are relevant to your health—UVA and UVB. UVA rays are responsible for deep skin wrinkling and melanoma (the most serious type of skin cancer). UVB rays can cause burning, basal cell carcinoma (the most common type of skin cancer), and eye cataracts. UVB rays are also helpful, because they react with cholesterol in the skin to produce vitamin D.

Vitamin D is a key nutrient for calcium regulation and healthy bones. Without adequate vitamin D, the body is susceptible to a variety of conditions, including osteoporosis, poor tooth development, thyroid disorders, cancer, depression, and infertility. Since vitamin D is produced from sun exposure, it is recommended that you expose your face and hands to the sun for 10 to 20 minutes each day. In this time, roughly 400 IUs of vitamin D are produced in the body, equivalent to an adult's daily requirement.



ABOUT THE TELEOSIS INSTITUTE

The Teleosis Institute is devoted to effective, sustainable health care provided by professionals who serve as environmental stewards. The Institute has three major goals:

-  To educate health professionals about the principles and practices of Ecologically Sustainable Medicine
-  To build a community-based network for professionals providing Green Health Care
-  To provide access to high-quality, cost-effective, sustainable medical services benefiting underserved populations and the environment in which we live

A not-for-profit organization, the Teleosis Institute was founded by Dr. Joel Kreisberg, DC, CCH, a health care practitioner and environmental educator. The Institute is based in Berkeley, California.



TELEOSIS

1521B 5th Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
510.558.7285
fax 510.527.1682
www.teleosis.org

Printed on recycled, process chlorine free paper using vegetable oil-based inks

HEALTHY SUN PRACTICES

Commercial sunscreen and too much sun can both be damaging to your health. Learn about safe sunscreens and healthy ways to enjoy the sun.



TELEOSIS



THE DANGERS OF COMMERCIAL SUNSCREEN

According to research conducted over the last ten years, the chemicals contained in most commercial sunscreens can be dangerous both for human and ecological health. These synthetic chemicals, known as endocrine disruptors, can mimic or block natural hormones by altering the synthesis, breakdown, and functioning of hormones and hormone receptors. Endocrine disruptors have been linked to various forms of cancer, can inhibit human growth and reproductive health, and can persist in the body and in the environment.

Until more research is done on the long-term effects of these chemicals, watch out for these common sunscreen ingredients:

- benzophenone-3 (Bp-3)
- homosalate (HMS)
- 4-methyl-benzylidene camphor (4-MBC)
- octyl-methoxycinnamate (OMC)
- octyl-dimethyl-PABA (OD-PABA)

SAFE SUNSCREEN CHOICES

Chemical-free and natural sunscreens use mineral blocks, such as titanium dioxide and zinc oxide, to protect the skin from UV rays. These physical, barrier-type sunscreens protect against both UVA and UVB rays. The following products, which are non-toxic, low in skin irritants, and free of perfumes or petroleum-based polymers, are healthier for the skin and provide full spectrum protection: Ecolani, Aubrey Organics, Aveda, and Dr. Hauschka.



HEALTHY SUN PRACTICES

Re-apply sunscreen frequently.

Sweating and swimming dilute any sunscreen's effectiveness. Next to using too low of a sun protection factor (SPF) or a total lack of protection, the failure to reapply sunscreen consistently is the main cause of burning. In intense sun, reapply at least every hour.

Don't rub it in.

Rapid absorption of lotion leaves the outermost layers of skin with reduced SPF. Dab sunscreen onto sun-sensitive areas. Wait 60 seconds, then gently smooth the sunscreen evenly onto your skin.

Take frequent shade breaks.

Taking 15 minutes or more per hour is enough time to let your skin cool down and recover.

Keep your skin moisturized and hydrated.

Moist skin is far less likely to burn and will tan faster. Moisturize and nourish your skin before and after long sun exposure.

Cool it.

If your skin overheats, it can react with a classic heat rash, which can quickly lead to burning. Take occasional shade breaks. Cool off in the water frequently and reapply sunscreen. Avoid waterproof, sport block, sweat proof, and baby block sunscreens if spending extended periods in the sun. The petroleum bases in these products can cause the skin to overheat quickly.

Never expose burned skin to more sun.

Burned skin will not tan—it will only get worse. Keep burned skin cool and try to minimize sweating to reduce chances of blistering. Never put waterproof sunscreens on pink or burned skin.

Healthy Sun Protocol:

Whether it be the start of summer or a trip to a sunnier locale, allow your skin to slowly get accustomed to increased levels of sun. Start with a short amount of time in the sun with frequent shade breaks. Gradually progress to longer sun exposure. Having an established base tan means that your skin is producing enough melanin to supplement the protection of the sunscreen you are using. As you develop a healthy tan, you can use a lower SPF, letting your skin absorb healthy amounts of vitamin D-producing UVB rays.

For this excellent advice on sun practices, we are grateful to Lani Simpson, DC, founder of the Ecolani line of skincare products.