

natural RADIANCE



Summer Skin Solution

No need to run from the sun

BY SALLY WADYKA

Every time we go outside, we face one of life's unfortunate ironies: What we treasure the most seems to have a nasty habit of exacting revenge on us if we overindulge. Take those spirit-raising rays of sunshine: Soak up too many, and

they'll deliver potentially deadly ultraviolet (UV) radiation. According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, sun exposure causes more than 90 percent of all skin cancers. One in five Americans may develop skin cancer during her lifetime.

In an interesting, wouldn't-you-just-know-it twist, however, research has recently emerged about the benefits of sun exposure. One of the body's main sources of vitamin D is sunlight, and a deficiency of that nutrient has been linked to increased risk of several types of cancer as well as to autoimmune diseases. In a study published this year, researchers at Stanford University School of Medicine showed that when sunlight triggers vitamin D synthesis, it causes immune cells to travel to the outer layers of skin where they can help repair cellular damage.

Does that mean you can toss out the sunscreen? Not so fast, warn dermatologists. While this latest research on the benefits of sunlight seems somewhat theoretical, science holds no doubt about the proven dangers of UV rays. Plus, you can get most of the vitamin D you need through diet and supplements, and the amount of unprotected UV exposure required to synthesize vitamin D is actually fairly minimal—about ten minutes two to three days a week.

Not only is the sun the No. 1 cause of skin cancer, it also hastens skin aging. Wrinkles, sagging, uneven skin tone, and brown patches all result from overexposure to UV light. "It's incontrovertible that being in the sun chews up collagen and elastin in the skin," says Alan Dattner, MD, a holistic dermatologist at Integrative Medicine and Dermatology in Manhattan and New Rochelle, New York. UV rays produce harmful particles called free radicals. Left unchecked, these free radicals damage the DNA of skin cells (which can lead to melanoma and basal cell carcinoma) and cause the breakdown of collagen and elastin (the connective fibers that give skin its elasticity and firmness). For proof of the sun's aging powers,

inside

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compare the skin on your buttock cheek with that on your face. The skin on your derriere still looks relatively smooth, with few if any wrinkles. Your face can show subtle signs of aging even as early as your 20s or 30s.

The ABCs of SPFs

When reading sunscreen labels, pay attention to the sun-protection factor, typically listed as SPF plus a number. A product with an SPF 15 (the minimum recommended by the Skin Cancer Foundation) will block about 93 percent of UVB rays—the ones that cause tanning and burning. SPF 30 will block about 97 percent, and even lotions with an SPF of 50 or higher probably block no more than 99 percent, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation. “Higher doesn’t necessarily mean better,” says Joel L. Cohen, MD, chair of patient education for the American Society of Dermatologic Surgery. “Because to get that higher SPF number, the product may contain a higher concentration of potentially irritating chemical ingredients.”

The other caveat? SPF refers only to the amount of protection you’re getting from UVB rays. While ample proof exists that UVA rays do just as much dam-

age to skin—causing signs of premature aging as well as raising the risk of skin cancer—knowing exactly how much protection you’re getting from UVA rays remains elusive. Hedge your bets by looking for a sunscreen that promises “broad spectrum” protection, which

How you apply is just as important as what you apply.

means it contains ingredients that filter out both UVA and UVB rays.

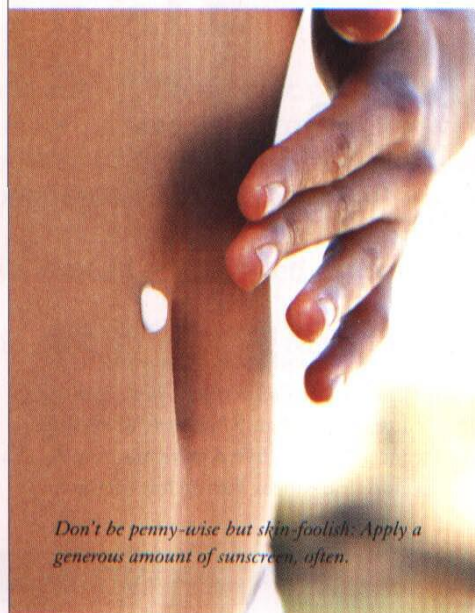
How you apply sunscreen is just as important as what you apply. According to the recommendations of the Skin Cancer Foundation, you need to apply a full ounce of sunscreen to protect your entire body adequately, and you need to put it on about 30 minutes before heading outdoors so the ingredients can bind with your skin. For a day outdoors, reapply about every two hours—more often if you take frequent dips or sweat profusely.

And when applying sunscreen, don’t neglect your scalp. A non-oily spray sunscreen is perfect for spritzing on your part. “A visor is great for keeping sun off the face, but since you can get skin cancer on your scalp, it’s better to wear a brimmed hat to cover your scalp and head,” says Cohen. Hair—unlike the scalp—can’t get skin cancer, but dermatologists warn that hair can dry out and lose its luster when exposed to too much UV light.

A protection problem

OK, so you need to shield your skin to save it from both cancer and premature signs of aging. How do you do it safely but without slathering yourself in chemicals you probably don’t want on your skin?

Try seeking out sunscreens that contain so-called “physi-



Don't be penny-wise but skin-foolish: Apply a generous amount of sunscreen, often.

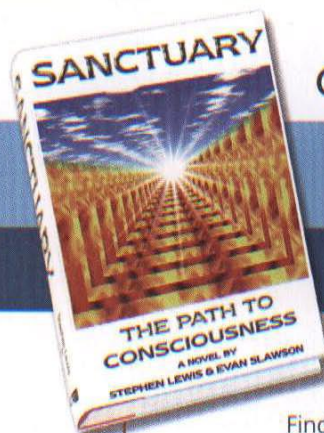
Corbis

Leave-No-Trace Sunscreens

One of the newest buzzwords in sun protection is *biodegradable*. The issue becomes particularly important in areas where sunscreen washes off in water and may damage delicate ecosystems, such as coral reefs. Several resorts in Mexico and Costa Rica actively encourage their guests to apply only biodegradable sunscreens. Look for products by All Terrain, Rocky Mountain, Lavera, Aubrey, Kiss My Face, and Jason Natural Organics. These sunscreens are safe to use in places that recommend biodegradable products.

cal" blockers to divert UV rays away from the skin. The two most common ingredients in this category are titanium dioxide and zinc oxide. "They block UVA and UVB," says Ben Fuchs, a cosmetic chemist, and founder of Sanitas Skincare. The downside, he points out, can be lotions with a "thick, white, and not very cosmetically elegant" consistency. To solve that problem, chemists have come up with "micronized" versions of these molecules, using nanotechnology to create particles so tiny they can't be seen on the skin.

That solution, unfortunately, has potentially created an even bigger problem. Some research suggests that these nanoparticles can penetrate the skin and find their way into the lymphatic system. At a meeting last October, the FDA looked into these ingredients, and the Cosmetic, Toiletry, and Fragrance Association (CTFA) presented studies showing that the ingredients don't penetrate the skin. "But they are not conclusive, and there are still a lot of unknowns," says Kristan Markey, a research analyst at the Environmental Working Group. Zinc, he explains, is a natural nutrient, so there's a good possibility that even if it does penetrate the skin, the body could make use of it. "But at higher levels, there is the potential for some



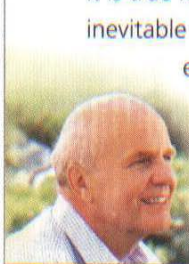
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chromosomal damage," says Markey. "The industry's take is that it isn't going into the body. But if it does get in, it doesn't look good."

Similar debates over the safety of various common sunscreen ingredients have recently come to the fore. Studies on lab rats have shown that benzophenone and octy-methoxycinnamate have estrogenic activity (meaning they can disrupt hormones). Avobenzone (also listed on labels as Parsol 1789) offers protection against UVA rays, but, ironically, it also breaks down when exposed to sunlight. "Once it breaks down, it can penetrate the skin," says Markey, "and what happens then is totally unknown and not understood." Two recent additions to the sunscreen ingredient list may help. Helioplex (which Neutrogena has patented) and the recently FDA-approved ingredient Mexoryl both work to make avoben-

"Being in the sun
chews up collagen and
elastin in the skin."

zone more stable. "On its own, avobenzone is a really unstable chemical that may be gone in 20 minutes," says Cohen. "But if it is stabilized by the other ingredients, the result is much more effective UVA blocking."

Cover up

Most experts agree that the risk of burning your skin in the sun is still much worse than any potential risks that may come from a sensible application of sunscreen. But other options may be worth experimenting with. "If you're worried about putting something on your skin, sun-protective clothing is a great alternative," says Cohen. A company called Coolibar (www.coolibar.com) markets hats, clothing, and swimwear made with titanium dioxide-containing microfibers that diffuse up to 98 percent

skin-friendly sunscreens

We loved these paraben-free sunscreens filled with natural botanicals. But reapply often—these products use fewer chemicals than mainstream sunscreens.



Lavender comforts all types of skin under the sun.

For the skin

Alba Botanica Mineral Sunscreen

Also fragrance free, this new, titanium dioxide-based lotion does not contain controversial ultrafine nanoparticles (see page 33). It's also formulated with organic lavender and aloe to soothe sun-exposed skin.

SPF 18 (\$9.95, www.albabotanica.com)

Derma e Anti-Aging Moisturizing ComFlex

This light, easy-to-blend sunscreen can be worn day or night. Green tea, olive oil, and cucumber extract enrich this versatile moisturizer.

SPF 15 (\$19.50, www.dermae.net)

Lavera Kids Plant-Green Sun Spray

Colored with a fast-fading green pigment so you can track application, this waterproof, biodegradable sunscreen needs no advance application and does hold up under water.

SPF 25 (\$26.50, www.lavera.com)

All Terrain Performance Sunblock AquaSport

Designed for dunking and splashing, this sunscreen is one of the hardest sunscreens we reviewed. All Terrain recently reformulated to remove all parabens from their line of sun protection for outdoor enthusiasts.

SPF 30 (\$9.99, www.allterrainco.com)

Erbaviva Sunscreen

Erbaviva's baby line, eschewing all synthetic ingredients, is safe for children and adults alike. Lightly scented with organic essential oils of lavender and chamomile.

SPF 15 (\$28, www.erbaviva.com)

Ole Henriksen Sun-light Protection Crème with Green Tea

Formulated specifically for dry skin, this shea butter-based creme includes green tea and grape seed oil, powerful antioxidants believed to slow the aging process.

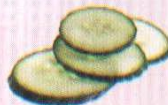
SPF 30 (\$28, www.olehenriksen.com)

Nature's Gate Be Solective Sunscreen for face

A sunscreen created for delicate facial skin that offers UVA/UVB protection plus an anti-aging complex derived from walnuts.

SPF 30 (\$14.99, www.natures-gate.com)

For other body parts



Shikai Color Reflect Mist & Go Conditioner

Sunflower extract and UV filters protect hair—dyed or not—from fading, while panthenol provides extra moisture for sun-frazzled hair.

(\$8.25, www.shikai.com)

Dr. Hauschka Sunscreen Stick

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SPF 30 (\$14.95, www.drhauschka.com)

of UV rays. Cohen also uses Sun-Guard, a protective laundry additive. You wash your clothes with it to infuse the fabric with a UV-blocking ingredient called Tinsorb (www.sunguard-sunprotection.com).

In addition to watching what you wear, it can help to watch what you eat. "The antioxidants found in fruits and vegetables are what protect those plants from the sun," says Fuchs. "And

they can have the same effect on your skin." Applied topically in sunscreens or antiaging serums, antioxidants (like vitamins C and E and green tea) also help boost the skin's own defenses against sun-induced free radical damage. **AM**

Sally Wadyka is a freelance writer who lives, works, and slathers on sunscreen in Boulder, Colorado.




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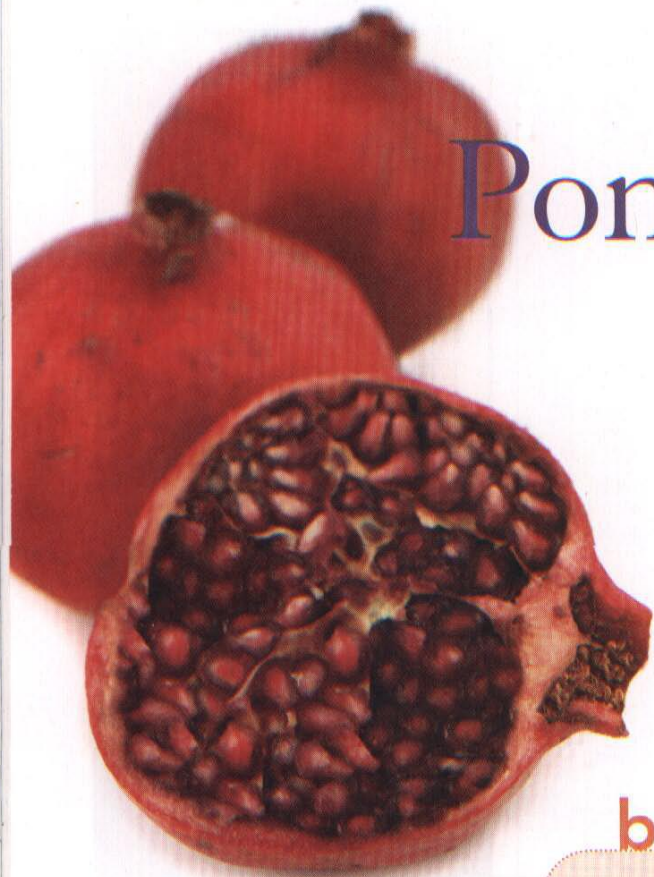
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Pomegranate power

These tiny, antioxidant-packed seeds debut in age-defying skin products to make you more radiant.

BY EVELYN SPENCE



buzz...

Pomegranates have gotten lots of good press lately for their nutritional benefits. As a food, they can help prevent heart disease, Alzheimer's, and cancer. They can even reduce erectile dysfunction. Succeeding cultures have prized the pomegranate for thousands of years: In Palestine, for instance, it represented fertility, and some scholars say that the Bible's notorious apple was really a pomegranate. Could any superfood get more super? Turns out, it can: Pomegranates, packed with antioxidants, also work wonders for your skin. Now you can look for pomegranate lotions, body butters, and balms.

Perhaps results like these account for the fruit's meteoric rise in the beauty world: A University of Michigan study in the February 2006 *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* showed that pomegranate seed oil stimulates the growth of keratinocytes, which promote regeneration of the skin and slow

TANNINS: The antioxidants that give poms their tart taste.

ANTHOCYANINS: Antioxidants responsible for giving fruits their bright colors—the darker, the better.

PUNICALAGIN: The strongest antioxidant in the pomegranate; found in its skin.

ELLAGIC ACID: A potent antioxidant in strawberries, raspberries, and pomegranates.

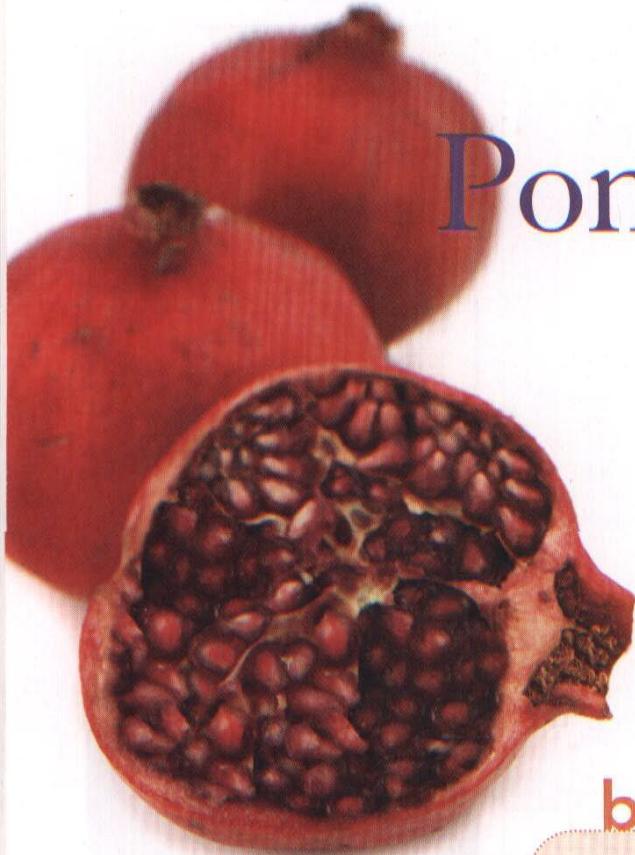
down its thinning. Another study in the March 2006 issue of *Photochemistry and Photobiology* showed that pomegranate fruit extract can actually prevent damage from UVA radiation.

But what part of the fruit has such a strong effect? Antioxidants—the same stuff that makes red wine and green tea so good for us. “When you cut an apple and leave it out in the air, it starts to turn brown because it’s oxidizing,” says Navindra Seeram, the assistant director for the UCLA Center for Human Nutrition. “Then think about your skin

cells. The same thing is happening. They’re constantly exposed to oxidative stress, which causes wrinkling, aging, and skin cancer.” The potent antioxidants in pomegranates take the form of polyphenols, which are healthy plant chemicals. Anthocyanins make pomegranates red (and blueberries blue). Tannins give them their tart taste. And both neutralize free radicals.

In fact, pomegranate’s multifaceted attributes spurred Ephraim Lansky of the Israel Institute of Technology (and the cofounder of Rimonest, a company with the mission of researching the fruit) to coin a whole new classification for it: a pleiotrope (“ply-oh-trope”), which means having many effects. The pomegranate’s compounds can be separated, then combined into cocktails to prevent and treat diabetes, ulcers, obesity, cancer, atherosclerosis, and various skin problems. “In pomegranates, we’ve found a retinoid-like effect”—retinoids are harsh acids often used to improve aging skin—“without any complication or irritation, and we can make the combinations very specific,” says Muhammad Nadeem Aslam, a research fellow in pathology at the University of Michigan. “They’re a wonderful fruit—and a way to promote skin repair in a completely natural way.”

Thanks to this story, freelance writer **Evelyn Spence** will never look a day over 30.



Pomegranate Power

These tiny, antioxidant-packed seeds debut in age-defying skin products to make you more radiant.

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R

Get the green out of
SWIMMER'S HAIR

Worried that your locks are drowning in a sea of chlorine or salt? Swimming—in a pool, ocean, or lake—takes a toll on your hair. While you're getting in shape or having fun, your hair is doing neither.

"Your hair is a natural sponge. It will soak up everything available to it," says S. Masyn Moyer, owner of Urban Pearl hair salon in Boulder, Colorado.

The chlorine in pools accentuates hair's natural absorbency—to the detriment of your hair. "Chlorine binds to the hair shaft and makes it more porous," says Lisa Saul, owner of EcoColors Salon and EcoColors Hair Color in Atlanta. Minerals take advantage of this damaged state and bind to your hair. In fact, chlorine doesn't tint swimmers' hair green—copper does. According to the medical journal *Cutis*, the increased copper concentration in pool water imbues blonde, gray, or white hair with unwanted green highlights—especially when previous hair damage exists.

Lake and ocean water won't damage hair in the way that pool water will, but salt, algae, and other materials in the water cling to hair. Those with fine or curly hair might actually enjoy the result, says Moyer.

"There are a lot of hair products with salt because people love that texture," she says.

Both Moyer and Saul agree that prevention is the best defense for your hair. "Wet your hair, coat it with a leave-in condi-

tioner, and wear a swim cap," Moyer says. "You're creating several layers of barriers." She also recommends protecting the hair by coating it with jojoba oil.

Post-swim, wash your hair with a chelator, a substance that binds with and removes the unwanted freeloaders on your hair. Saul recommends rinsing your hair with pure aloe vera, a natural chelator, before your regular routine. Both Moyer and Saul say those who wash with well water, which is similarly high in minerals, also often have "swimmer's hair."

If you insist on braving the pool without taking any precautions, here are some natural swimmer shampoos and conditioners to try: Aubrey Organics' Swimmer's Normalizing Shampoo and Conditioner, which contain organic aloe vera and leave hair remarkably soft; Jason Natural Products' Swimmer's & Sports Rejuvenating Shampoo and Conditioner, also contain aloe vera and have a sporty, unisex scent; and California Baby's Swimmer's

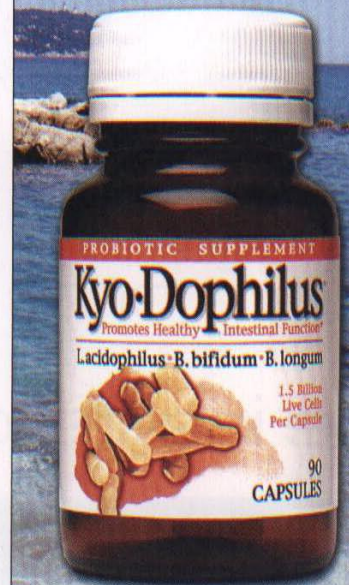
Defense Shampoo & Bodywash and Hair Conditioner. Formulated for kids and "sensitive adults," this last pair has a fun floral scent and takes out the post-chlorine dryness.

—Bryce Edmonds



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