



Protect Your Skin This Summer

BY ELIZABETH ROSTAN, MD

Ah summertime... the beach, the lake, the pool – all that sun and fun!

But with that sun comes sun damage to your skin. And with sun damage over time comes wrinkles, brown splotches and loose skin. Sun exposure causes breakdown of the structure of our skin – collagen and elastin. Sun also damages skin at a cellular level and causes skin cancers including deadly melanoma. Start now to prevent leathery skin and skin cancer.

THE BEST DEFENSE

Daily use of a broad spectrum sun screen is the best defense against the harmful effects of sun exposure. A daily sun block of at least SPF 15 is recommended and a minimum SPF of 30 for outdoor activities. Not all sun blocks are created equal. Those containing zinc or titanium offer the best protection from UVB and UVA rays. Look for a concentration of at least 5% zinc or 2% titanium.

Wary of crinkly, wrinkly and blotchy arms? Most of those changes come from sun damage to skin. Sun protective shirts provide the best, most consistent and most reliable sun protection of non-facial

skin. Shirts made with icefil® fabric actually cool the skin 5 degrees – ideal for a hot summer day!

GET RADICAL WITH SKIN PROTECTION

Free oxygen radicals are generated in the skin upon exposure to the sun. These free oxygen radicals are the same ones that cause rust and fruit rot and do similar destructive things to critical structures in our skin – leading to yes, again – wrinkles and lax skin. Daily use of a topical antioxidant is crucial to prevention of this skin damage.

There are a number of carefully formulated antioxidants for the skin. The best studied include vitamins C and E, ferulic acid, phloretin, green tea, and coffeberry extract. Others include caffeine, resveratrol (red wine), idebenone, and flavinoids. One of the earliest topical antioxidants to come to consumers was the Skin Ceuticals topical vitamin C formulations, and they remain a top choice today. You can further boost your skin's antioxidant defenses with an oral supplement – Heliocare® contains extract of a fern plant that evolved and

survived harsh sun exposure by creating powerful antioxidants.

RETIN-A® IS NOT JUST FOR ACNE.

It is very likely you have heard that retinoids – Retin-A® (tretinoin) and retinol – are great anti-aging creams, but you may be surprised by the reason. Topical retinoids when used regularly on the skin prevent the breakdown of collagen that is induced by sun exposure. When you go out into the sun, an enzyme that breaks down collagen is activated and begins to destroy your skin's vital collagen. The skin heals but with small bits of scar tissue that over time accumulates as wrinkles, dull color and tone, and texture change in the skin. Regular use of a topical retinol or tretinoin cream prevents this cycle by blocking activation of the collagen destroying enzyme.

DON'T LET YOUR SKIN TAKE A VACATION!

Summer is the best time to work overtime to protect your skin from damage. *