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Meet Bert Jacobs
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We're working hard to bring you the news from our town

THE MATTHEWS RECORD



yourhealth

HEALTH ADVICE FROM EXPERTS IN MATTHEWS

Is your sunscreen all it's cracked up to be?



HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF THIS SUMMER



Dr. Smith

It has been drilled into our minds to wear sunscreen to protect us from the sun's rays. But what if the combination of toxic ingredients in sunscreen and the inhibited production of Vitamin D (as a result of the increased use of sunscreen) are contributing to the increasing rates of melanoma? This debate continues.

There are mixed views in the medical community and studies that support both sides of this debate. Will conventional wisdom change in the years to come? Will it be similar to the margarine and transfat era? Will we again realize that we should appreciate what mother nature has provided, instead of changing or fighting it?

PHYSICAL VS. CHEMICAL SUNBLOCKS

Physical sunblocks reflect or scatter UV radiation before it reaches your skin. Titanium dioxide and zinc oxide are naturally occurring minerals that act as broad spec-

trum physical sunblocks.

Chemical sunblocks work by absorbing the energy of UV radiation before it affects your skin.

The Environmental Working Group www.ewg.org is a non-profit organization that has compiled an extensive database of personal care ingredients and the related scientific studies on their effects. This is a great resource for investigating what is in your sunscreen and other skin and personal care products.

A preliminary hypothesis of a recent study from Stanford University suggests that sun exposure may actually protect the skin from damage. The protection comes from Vitamin D. It is believed that Vitamin D activates a mechanism in the T-cells (important in immune response) that cause them to migrate to the skin, where they theoretically boost immunity.

Slathering on sunscreen would therefore prevent the body from producing this important vitamin, contributing to the increasing prevalence of Vitamin D deficiency.

Dr. Michael Smith, of Carolinas Natural Health Center in Matthews, will be giving a FREE Health talk at the Matthews Library on Tuesday, May 13 at 7:00 pm on the benefits of Vitamin D and the hazards of sunscreen.

Tips

1. Use a hat, umbrella, or cover up with clothing whenever you can.
2. Start with small doses of sun exposure, gradually increasing as the summer continues.
3. A non-toxic, physical (one that contains titanium dioxide or zinc oxide) sunscreen should be used if you will be exposed to the sun for long periods of time, to prevent burning. Avoid any "micronized" ingredients in your sunscreen. More information is available at www.ewg.org.
4. Increase your intake of anti-oxidants like beta-carotene, green tea, lutein, lycopene, and selenium before and after prolonged sun exposure. Beta-carotene is naturally present in many fruits, and vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes, squash, spinach, apricots, and green peppers. It has the strongest scientific evidence in the prevention of sun damage.
5. Use a good quality, non-toxic after sun lotion that is rich in anti-oxidants. Our favorite is Burt's Bees Carrot Nutritive Body Lotion.

"Killer" tan . . . not to die for



Shumaker

Age spots. Wrinkles. Sagging skin. Cancer. Death. We all have heard the warnings and risks associated with sun exposure and indoor tanning. As a teenager in the 70's I loved to sunbathe with baby oil, became a little more sensible in the 80's after having children and using sunscreen with them and was an avid indoor tanner in the 90's while operating Trim Up and what we thought was "safe" indoor tanning.

My skin started to suffer from all of the overexposure and I went through many treatments and surgeries for basal cell skin cancer. Luckily my cancer was

not life-threatening but my dear sister-in-law's life ended last August, within a year of being diagnosed with melanoma.

I still love the look of a tan but now I can say that I really have a "healthy" glow since switching to sunless tanning a few years ago.

UV tanning is even more popular these days, especially with teens, which is particularly dangerous because they are still experiencing skin cell growth, making exposure to UV rays even more detrimental. UVA radiation in tanning beds is 2-5 times stronger than the sun. Teenagers who tan more than 10 times a year are 8 times more likely to develop malignant melanoma, which is the leading cause of cancer death for women aged 25-30. There is recent proposed

legislation to prohibit indoor tanning for kids under age 18, just as minors need protection from other dangers while underage.

The reality is that teens and many others will still want a "killer" tan despite the risks.

REASONS TO USE SUNLESS TANNING:

1. Sunless Tans are completely safe.
2. Sunless tanning formula is now better than ever. No more orange or streaking!
3. You can get a sunless tan even if you can't get a real tan.
4. Sunless tans are temporary. The color gradually fades after 7 days.
5. Sunless tans take less time than a real tan. You will see results within a few hours.
6. No worry about tan lines.

INFORMATION

mystictanning.com or Trimupwomen.com

DEBI SHUMAKER is owner of TRIM UP fitness club for women in Matthews.