

Safe Fun in the Sun

Nutrition Offers UV Shield

Sharron Leonard

Because sunlight activates the synthesis of vitamin D, a nutrient that works with vitamin A to build strong bones and good eyesight it is essential for health. Furthermore, bright light, specifically sunshine, can improve your mood and help ward off depression. But all things in moderation. Overexposure to UV rays can cause potentially extensive damage to the skin, an all-too-common occurrence. "Skin cancer is now considered epidemic throughout the nation", according to The Centers for Disease Control Prevention. "Over one million residents in the United States are expected to get skin cancer this year more people than the collective total of all who will get cancers of the breast, prostate, lung and colon. Exposure to

toxic molecules. These are known as free radicals and can lead to malignancies. Sunscreen, adequate coverage and sunglasses have long been recommended to avoid this damage, but diverse studies now suggest some promising supplemental strategies for UV protection from the inside out. Certain nutrients and a low-fat diet have shown specific anti-cancer properties.

Free Radical Control

Antioxidants have long been known to neutralize free radicals and render them inactive, protecting cellular structure. Powerful antioxidants include vitamin C (citrus fruits, strawberries, broccoli, tomatoes), vitamin E (asparagus, raw



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ultraviolet (UV) rays in sunlight causes 90 percent of the skin cancer cases." And this overexposure may double the risk of melanoma, a type of skin cancer that causes more than 80 percent of skin cancer deaths.

UV rays cause oxidative damage and can actually change the skin's DNA cellular structure, creating highly unstable and

nuts and seeds, spinach), beta-carotene (yellow and orange vegetables) as well as the minerals zinc (shell fish, legumes, whole-grain foods) and selenium (nuts, whole-wheat bread, oatmeal). A recent study published in the Journal of Investigative Dermatology demonstrates that lutein and zeaxanthin, plant

Continued on page 2

A tough day at the office is even tougher when your office contains spectator seating.

~Nik Posa

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In this Issue

Safe Fun in the Sun
No Pain, No Gain?
Hot or Cold for Injuries?

Continued from page 1

pigments found in predominately green leafy vegetables, also have strong antioxidant properties that diminish the effects of UV irradiation by reducing the acute inflammatory responses. Lutein- and zeaxanthin-rich foods include green, leafy vegetables such as spinach, kale, broccoli and turnips as well as corn and egg yolks.

As long ago as 1991, studies have shown green tea consumption and topical application afford protection against skin tumors. More recent research corroborates these results and points to the polyphenols in green tea, which contain antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. In addition, one major element in green tea, epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG), is thought to stop production of an enzyme required for cancer cell growth. Several cups of green tea might be a worthwhile addition to your daily routine.

Avoiding fatty foods may also provide benefit. Studies suggest that a low-fat diet can reduce the incidence of premalignant lesions called actinic keratosis. To maintain a low-fat diet, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends that you get most of your calories from organic, whole foods such as grains, fruits, and vegetables and to avoid foods high in saturated fats. For more information, visit the website www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/.

Know the Index

Even though it is helpful to counteract damage to your skin through nutrition, it remains vital to shield yourself from the sun's invisible UV rays and avoid them when they're at their most intense. The UV Index, a measurement of ultra-violet sun radiation, can assist in protecting you from potentially harmful exposure. This forecast of UV intensity ranges from a nighttime low of 0 to a very sunny 10-plus. It is greatest when the sun hits its apex (noon), then rapidly decreases as the sun moves across the afternoon sky. The higher the UV Index, the shorter the time for skin damage to occur. To determine the UV Index in your area, check your local newspaper, TV and radio news broadcasts, or you can visit www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's website. This rating allows you

to determine your geographic risk and, in turn, the level of adequate sun protection needed.

Regardless of your sun-screening defenses, always be vigilant about checking your skin for possible signs of melanoma. "When melanoma is detected in its early stage, surgical removal cures the disease in most cases," according to the American Academy of Dermatology. "If the disease has spread to lymph nodes, the 5-year survival rate is 30-40 percent. If the disease has spread to distant organs, the 5-year survival rate is 12 percent."

Melanoma appears as a pre-existing mole that changes, or as a new mole on previously unaffected/clear skin. Performing skin self-exams every few months and knowing the characteristics to look for in any mole identified will enhance early detection and reduce risk.

For more information on early detection, visit www.skincancer.org.

And don't forget common sense practices:

--Avoid long-term sun exposure and wear a hat, sunglasses, and protective clothing.

--Apply sunscreen with SPF of 30 or above.

--Avoid artificial tanning devices.

--And be aware of sun exposure year-round.

With a few protective measures, you can continue to enjoy fun in the sun safely. Wear your sunscreen--in the winter months as well as the summer--seek shade, cover up with sleeves and pants, and don't forget your hat!



A colorful diet can help provide sun protection from the inside out.

No Pain, No Gain?

Bodywork Doesn't Have to Hurt to be Effective

Cathy Ulrich

Some people believe massage must be painful to be effective. While some modalities may be intense, this doesn't necessarily translate to a knuckle-biting experience. In fact, painful bodywork can be counterproductive. If you can't breathe comfortably, want to tighten up, make a face, or curl your toes, the technique is too much for you. Your body will go into a protective mode and actually block any positive change.

"No pain, no gain" just doesn't have to apply when it comes to bodywork. Be sure to provide feedback to your practitioner so that you're on the same page. Think of it as a "scale of intensity." On my scale, zero is not touching you and ten is pain--not the worst pain you've ever felt but the place where you want to hold your breath, tighten up, make a face, leave your body. That's a ten.

You shouldn't ever have to be in a pain range to get results, and be sure to let your practitioner know if you're in an eight or nine range. They may stay at

that level if that's where the therapeutic value will be attained, but again, only if it's manageable and you're not tightening up.

And every single client is different. Not only do individuals all start in different places, but their bodies respond differently, and their pain thresholds are extremely varied. What one person finds heavenly, another calls torture.

If it does feel too painful, be sure to tell your therapist. Usually, a practitioner can simply slow down to ease the intensity without losing therapeutic value. Sometimes, if you are nervous or stressed, just remembering to breathe will make your body more open, and you'll remain comfortable.

Bodywork needn't be a test of how tough you are. By giving your therapist appropriate feedback and understanding that painful techniques aren't really helping your body heal, you'll have a great experience in the session and feel better afterward.



Therapeutic massage actually feels good.

Hot or Cold for Injuries?

How to Know Which is Best for You

Art Riggs

We all know that treating an injury immediately after it happens can help minimize the pain and damage as well as facilitate recovery. But after rolling your ankle in a soccer game, or hurting your back when lifting your toddler, or tweaking your knee when stepping out of your car, what's best? Should you ice it to try to control inflammation, or would heat be better to promote circulation?

While it's difficult to establish a fail-safe rule for when to apply ice or heat, the general directive is to use ice for the first forty-eight to seventy-two hours after an acute injury and then switch to heat.

It Depends

The reality is that many conditions are not necessarily the result of a specific

injury. I call these conditions "recurrent acute" and find them by far the most common: sciatica that occurs when you drive a car; a back that flare up every time you garden; or tennis elbow from intense computer work. In these cases, consistent and frequent applications of ice may prove very helpful over long periods of time, particularly immediately after experiencing the event that causes problems.

Conversely, back or other muscle spasms caused by overexertion rather than injury may benefit greatly from heat immediately upon the onset of symptoms or immediately after exercise in order to relax the muscles and increase circulation. Also, muscle belly pain not resulting from acute and

serious trauma generally responds well to heat, which can break the spasms and release the strain. On the other hand, nerve and tendon pain--regardless of the duration of symptoms, even if you've been experience them for months--benefit from ice.

What Works for You

The bottom line: different individuals will constitutionally vary greatly in their reactions. Some people are more prone to the types of inflammation exacerbated by heat, while others find their bodies contracting and tightening at the mere mention of ice. Try each option and pay close attention to how your body and mind respond, and let your gut be your guide. Ultimately, what works best for you is, well, what's best for you.

*Sport is a
preserver of
health.*

-~Hippocrates

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