



Health And Well-Being

Bright Ideas For Avoiding Sun Damage

(NAPSA)—Recent research reviewed by Cathleen London, M.D., a Board Certified Family Practice Physician, has shed some light on the issue of avoiding sun damage. It turns out, she says, doing so can help you save more than your skin.

The Problem

“UV light can dramatically suppress your immune system,” says Dr. London. “Exposure to UV light for more than 10 to 20 minutes a day impairs your body’s ability to fight off infections and the spontaneous occurrence of cancer cells, which happens 24 hours a day. In essence, UV light damages your body’s policemen and prevents them from doing their job.”

UV light, she explains, causes a chemical change that can stimulate the growth of cancer cells anywhere in the body. “Melanoma doesn’t only occur where the sun shines. It often shows up on soles of patients’ feet, for example.”

Some Solutions

Dr. London’s suggested arsenal against UV damage includes:

- A topical sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher, worn every day, even cloudy ones
- Trying to stay indoors during the peak sunlight hours: 11 am to 3 pm
- A broad-brimmed hat
- UVA- and UVB-resistant sunglasses
- A diet rich in foods that can boost the body’s chemistry. “Certain molecules in some foods, such as broccoli, can absorb dangerous toxic substances called free radicals that attack and damage DNA.”
- A natural “sunscreen” called astaxanthin, which can slow or even prevent sunburn when taken orally as a supplement. “Another free radical ‘sponge’ is a little-known category of plant called astaxanthin. It’s a food that also happens to be a sunscreen. You can eat it or put it on your skin.”



Sun damage can be more than skin deep. Protect yourself with sunscreen, a hat and the right diet.

Natural astaxanthin, Dr. London says, has been shown to be a potent antioxidant, more than 500 times stronger than vitamin E and 10 times stronger than beta-carotene. Astaxanthin has also been shown to enhance and modulate the immune system, helping reduce the inflammation that leads to sunburn.

The most common sources of astaxanthin are marine plants and the animals that eat them. “One to three pounds of salmon, for example, contain the same amount of astaxanthin as one patented supplement capsule. But with the supplement, you can get those properties without the potential of being exposed to toxins such as mercury,” says Dr. London.

This supplement, a consumer form of astaxanthin called “BioAstin,” has undergone a clinical trial. It was shown to significantly decrease UV damage to the skin in just two weeks.

Learn More

You can learn more from Cyanotech, a company that creates the supplement, at www.cyanotech.com.

• *Dr. London is a clinical instructor at both the Boston University School of Medicine and the Tufts University School of Medicine.*