



Practise Safe Sun

How sunbathing can be GOOD for you

Do you shield your skin from sunlight through protective creams and clothing? Do you spend most of your time indoors? If so, you might be expected to believe that you would be doing your skin a favour. The irony is however, that by avoiding the oft-vilified sun you could in fact be putting your health at risk. You actually NEED exposure to sunlight in order for your body to manufacture vitamin D from UVB rays. This nutrient is increasingly being recognised as a vital vitamin in protecting ourselves from many types of cancer, including breast, prostate and colon cancers.



Modern day living seems designed to reduce our vitamin D intake to a minimum however. we are Dracula-like when it comes to sunlight, spending our days indoors and when we do venture out, we are urged to slap on the sun block. It is true that our diet does contribute to our vitamin D levels, but the low-fat diet mantra discriminates against foods which are naturally rich in vitamin D, like intestines, organ meat, skin and fat as well as shell fish, kippers and herrings, as many are also rich in fat and cholesterol.

It is hardly surprising therefore that "Most people living in America and Northern Europe have levels of vitamin D that are low, based on the latest evidence," declares Professor Meir Stampfer, an epidemiologist at Harvard Medical School. "And on top of that as a population we are older and fatter than we used to be and both those things reduce our ability to absorb Vitamin D from sunlight." An average 70-year-old, according to Stampfer, can make only about a quarter of the vitamin D from the sun as a 20-year-old. What's more, even in summer you only really get enough UVB rays between about 10am and 2pm; just exposing your hands face and arms during that time gives you about 200 - 400 IU, which is still considered a fairly low level. To get a more satisfactory amount American experts are suggesting you need to expose 50% to 80% of your skin for about 20 minutes.

So how do you ensure that you are getting sufficient sun exposure to top up your vitamin D levels, while still safeguarding your skin from burning from UVB rays and ageing from UVA rays? The answer is by practising responsible sunbathing, as well as eating vitamin D rich foods such as eggs and fish, and taking a daily multivitamin containing vitamin D. Don't shy away from the sun as is it were an enemy - simply make sure that your skin is protected from harmful UV rays by supporting its antioxidant defences. First and foremost you need to use a sunscreen that is very high in antioxidant vitamins A, C, E and beta-carotene to support your skin when faced with

the sun's onslaught. Vitamin A is the key to soft, plump, youthful skin, as it is involved in the production of the keratins and ceramides that build a healthy, firm protective outer layer of skin, the production of glycosaminoglycans, required for holding water in place between skin cells and is also required in the manufacture of melanin, to help maintain an even skin colour. Vitamin A works best in conjunction with vitamins C, E, beta-carotene and pro-vitamin B5.

Standard beauty counter products do not contain nearly enough vitamin A to make any appreciable difference to your skin however, and diet and supplements alone will not supply enough of the sun-protective nutrients to your skin as they will be used up elsewhere in the body en route. The answer is the direct, topical application of a nutrient-rich cream applied morning and evening as part of your everyday skincare regime, in addition to applying an antioxidant rich sunscreen prior to sun exposure.

In order to get your skin ready for summer I recommend you do the following:

- . Apply a vitamin A cream like **Environ's Original Début moisturiser** directly to your skin to maintain the integrity of the skin cells that form a smooth outer layer and act as a natural barrier.
- . Support your skin's antioxidant defences against UV rays with a **sunscreen** that contains vitamins C, E and beta-carotene and pro-vitamin B5 - I use **Environ's RAD Antioxidant Sunscreen**.

To find out more about [Environ Antioxidant sunscreen products](#).

Wishing you the best of health,



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