

Tip of the month

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Sunscreen contributes to cancer?????

Welcome back sun! Once again we can finally enjoy being outside. Before slathering on your favorite sunscreen, it is prudent to think about the consequences. We've all been taught that sunscreen prevents skin cancer and that it was important to cake the stuff on when spending time in the sunny outdoors for any length of time. As summer approaches, shoppers will be stocking up on bottles of this stuff in preparation for preventing sunburn. While sunburn is not a healthy or comfortable thing to experience, much research is now pointing to the fact that a lack of sun exposure is even more detrimental. Ultraviolet light causes vitamin D to be produced and then absorbed through our skin. The use of sunscreen not only blocks the sun's rays from burning our skin, it also blocks this production of this essential vitamin D. This is a nutrient that the human body desperately needs to prevent as many as 25 chronic diseases, and 77 forms of cancer. Notably: prostate, breast, colon, lung, and brain cancer, osteoporosis, schizophrenia, and heart disease. Research is also showing that most of us living here in the Northern hemisphere are chronically deficient in vitamin D.

Obtaining vitamin D from food, typically only provides us about 10% of our need. We need frequent, unimpeded sun exposure. So around here, I recommend 4,000 IU of oral vitamin D daily when not in the sun.

Another reason that sunscreen contributes to cancer is because it contains toxic chemicals in the form of artificial fragrance, chemical colors, and petroleum products used as fillers and stabilizers. These chemicals are absorbed through the skin where they enter the bloodstream and wreak havoc on the immune system. Unfortunately also, these chemicals are carcinogenic and can damage the liver, the heart, and even promote systemic cancer.

So you may ask: "What are practical ways to get sun exposure without burning?"

*First, slowly increase the duration of your time in the sun, with frequent breaks. The goal is to get a deep tan, which provides natural protection from sunburn.

*Increase the amount of anti-oxidants in your diet by consuming more berries, fruits and veggies. Free radical damage in your skin cells from radiation exposure of sunlight is what causes sunburn. This can be dramatically decreased by consuming adequate levels of anti-oxidant rich produce, creating a decreased vulnerability to sunburn from the "inside out".

*Consider use of a zinc oxide sunscreen if spending prolonged time in the sun. This is a "barrier" type (versus a toxic chemical type) of sunscreen which reflects away the ultraviolet light without the skin having to absorb the harmful carcinogenic chemicals discussed above in standard sunscreens.