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Reap the Sun's Benefits Without Damaging Your Skin and Body.

While the warmth of the sun on your body, especially after a long, cold winter, feels so good and relaxing, we now know if we're not careful it can wreak terrible havoc. ■ The sun is harmful to us because it damages the outer layer of skin and is capable of penetrating several layers of

skin, resulting in precancerous and cancerous growths. ■ The sun also causes premature aging, wrinkling, brown spots and broken blood vessels. ■ The sun inhibits the skin's ability to repair itself. As you get older, you lose that ability anyway, the sun only speeds up this process.

Run for Cover

Because sun damage is invisible to the naked eye, there are still a lot of people who don't take unprotected sun exposure seriously. If we could actually see the UV rays of the sun penetrating the skin like lasers, many people would have a different attitude.

There is no safe way to tan with UV rays. A suntan is the skin's response to an injury. Tanning occurs when the sun's ultraviolet rays penetrate the skin's inner layer, which causes the skin to produce more melanin (the pigment that gives the skin its color) as a response to the injury.

There are two types of UV rays, UVA and UVB.

UVB rays are the shortest rays and are traditionally associated with causing skin cancer.

Cancer develops as a result of certain cells found in the top layers of the skin that form precancerous growths. UVA are longer rays and are traditionally associated with wrinkling, aging, sagging skin and dilated capillaries, according to Debra Wattenberg, M.D., dermatologist and clinical associate at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City.

While the sun is actually healthy in terms of the vitamin D it provides—our skin has the ability to convert ultraviolet rays into vitamin D—and the effect it has on our moods, it is never safe to have a tan.

It is, however, perfectly safe to be outside as long as you are "sun safe."

You don't need to be directly in the sun to get sun exposure, and if you are going to be outside and cannot avoid the direct sun because you're sailing or swimming, the best time would be before 10 a.m. or after 3 p.m. This is when the sun's rays are not at their strongest.

And, always make sure to wear sunscreen.

Anti-Aging Products

There are two different types of sun protection: sunscreens and sunblocks. Sunscreens actually absorb the sun's rays.

However, they don't effectively block the UV rays. A sunblock physi-



The sun is very healthy for us—provided we are “sun-safe.”

cally blocks or reflects the UV rays. Most of the newer sunblocks are broad spectrum, which are both UVA and UVB blockers. The broad spectrum sunblock's ingredients provide protection both chemically and physically. The chemical most widely used in them is titanium dioxide—micronized zinc oxide—mixed with the same chemicals usually found in sunscreens.

Eight Techniques

1 Sunscreens should be applied to dry skin 15 to 30 minutes before going outdoors.

2 Apply your sunscreen liberally (one ounce is considered enough to cover the entire body) and pay particular attention to the face, hands and arms.

3 Be careful to cover exposed areas completely. A missed spot could mean a patchy, painful sunburn.

4 Lips get sunburned too, so apply a lip product that contains sunscreen with an SPF of 15.

5 Sunscreens should be applied in the morning and reapplied after swimming or perspiring heavily.

6 Even so-called waterproof sunscreens may lose their effectiveness after 80 minutes in the water. Remember to reapply after water sports.

7 Sunscreens rub off as well as wash off. So if you've towel-dried or have been in the water for longer than 80 minutes, reapply your waterproof sunscreen for maximum protection.

8 Remember that sun exposure occurs all the time, even during

a lunchtime stroll on a cloudy afternoon.

Fry Now, Pay Later

Over 60,000 cases of skin cancer happen in this country every year, making it the most common of all types of cancer. Over 30,000 cases of malignant melanoma are

didn't know better, which cannot be reversed.

However, many dermatologists these days recommend Retin-A because it increases collagen production and rapid cell turnover. Glycolic Acid has a similar effect. Dr. Wattenberg explains that if there is rapid cell turnover, there is less of a chance for cells to form precancerous growths.

Sunless Tanning

The only safe way to tan is by using a self-tanning product. Self-tanning products are greatly improved from the ones originally marketed years ago that turned your skin orange.

The active ingredient that has improved the function of today's products is called dihydroxyacetone (DHA). It has been defined in the cosmetics industry as a colorless dye and has been approved as safe by the Food and Drug Administration.

The action of this chemically induced tan takes place on the stratum corneum, the outermost part of the skin.

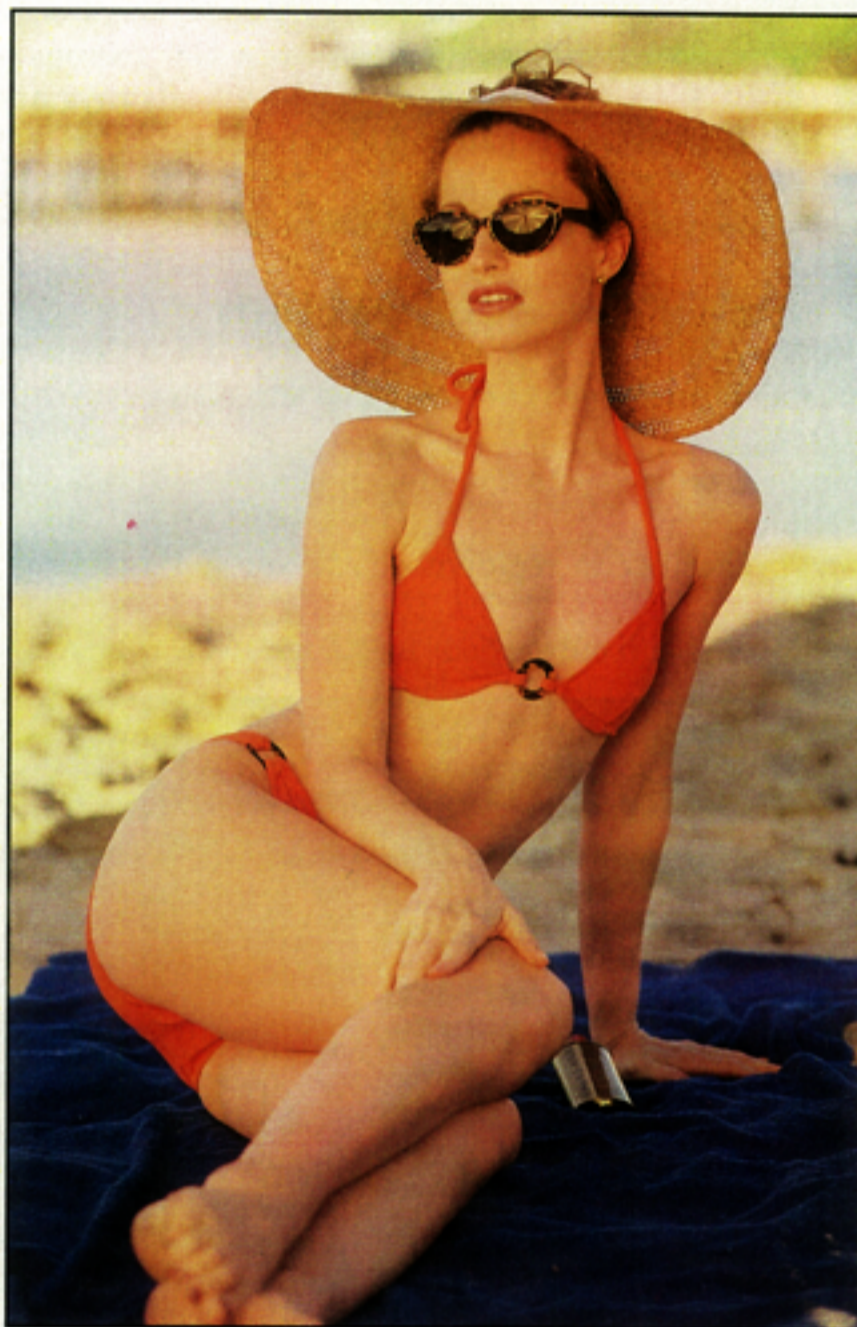
Before applying a self-tanning product, you should exfoliate and

condition your skin. Priming your skin is the key to achieving a natural-looking tan.

To prevent your sunless tan from fading, which it will do as the dead skin cells shed, reapply the product frequently.

Several companies have both broad spectrum sun products as well as self-tanning ones. Nivea Sun Moisturizing Sun Lotion, SPF 15; Neutrogena Oil-Free

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discovered each year, resulting in over 9,000 deaths.

And why is this problem so pervasive? Sunlight. It's nearly the sole cause of two major types of skin cancers, and the probable cause in many melanoma cases.

The two most common types of skin cancer, basal and squamous cell, are a result of chronic sun exposure. But a lot of sun damage comes from prior sun exposure, like when you were younger and