

Healthy Skin Newsletter

Issue 1

November 2009

That Healthy (?) Indoor Tan

The indoor tanning industry is alive and well in North America. In fact, it's a billion dollar annual industry in the US alone. Yet we know that indoor tanning poses significant risks. Numerous studies now support the potential role of artificial UV radiation in triggering skin cancer. And why should that surprise us? Some tanning beds have the capacity to emit 5x the UV radiation as a midday Australian sun. Risk of melanoma appears to particularly increase when first exposure to sun beds occurs before 35 years of age according to 7 different scientific studies. Odd paradox- the population most targeted by the tanning industry- fair-skinned teenagers and young adults, is the population at highest risk of UV photo damage.

Making matters worse, many still believe the myth that the tan they receive will protect them from future skin damage from subsequent sun exposure. But research consistently shows that tanning provides the equivalent protection of an SPF 2 sunscreen- well below what's necessary to prevent damage from harmful ultraviolet radiation. The National Institutes of Health and the World Health Organization have acknowledged the risks of indoor tanning for years- wise health consumers would do well to do the same.

Stress & Skin

How we feel on the inside could be affecting how we look on the outside. In fact, studies link factors that impact our emotional well-being — such as stress, depression and anxiety — to an increase in skin, hair or nail problems.

- Stress can make the skin more sensitive and reactive
- stress can make psoriasis or rosacea worse, result in acne lesions that are more inflamed and more persistent, cause brittle nails and ridging of the nails, cause hair loss, cause or worsen hives, and cause excessive perspiration
- Stress also is a known trigger or can be a worsening factor for fever blisters, psoriasis, seborrheic dermatitis and has even been shown to impair skin barrier function and dehydrate the skin — allowing more irritants, allergens, and infectious agents to penetrate the skin and cause problems
- stress can also lead to the neglect or abuse of skin

20 Common Questions About Sensitive Skin

<http://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/sensitive-skin-20-faqs>

Skin

Body organs aren't all internal like the brain or the heart. There's one we wear on the outside. Skin is our largest organ—adults carry some 8 pounds (3.6 kilograms) and 22 square feet (2 square meters) of it. This fleshy covering does a lot more than make us look presentable. In fact, without it, we'd literally evaporate.

Skin acts as a waterproof, insulating shield, guarding the body against extremes of temperature, damaging sunlight, and harmful chemicals. It also exudes antibacterial substances that prevent infection and manufactures vitamin D for converting calcium into healthy bones. Skin additionally is a huge sensor packed with nerves for keeping the brain in touch with the outside world. At the same time, skin allows us free movement, proving itself an amazingly versatile organ.

Facts about Skin Cancer

Did you know that on any given day more than 1 million people tan in tanning salons? What about the fact that acne is the most common skin disorder in the United States, affecting 40 to 50 million Americans?

- more than 1 million cases of skin cancer are diagnosed in the US each year
- 1 in every 5 Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime
- Melanoma is the most common form of cancer for young adults 25-29 years old and the second most common form of cancer for adolescents and young adults 15-29 years old
- Melanoma is increasing faster in females 15-29 years old than males in the same age group. In females 15-29 years old, the torso is the most common location for developing melanoma, which might be due to high-risk tanning behaviors
- Melanoma in individuals 10-39 years old is highly curable, with five-year survival rates exceeding 90 percent.
- 1 in 58 men and women will be diagnosed with melanoma during their lifetime
- One American dies of melanoma almost every hour
- About 75 percent of skin cancer deaths are from melanoma
- People with more than 50 moles, atypical moles, or a family history of melanoma are at an increased risk of developing melanoma
- The five-year survival rate for people whose melanoma is detected and treated before it spreads to the lymph nodes is 99%. Five-year survival rates for regional stage melanomas are 65 %and distant stage melanomas 15 %
- The American Cancer Society recommends a skin cancer-related checkup and counseling about sun exposure as part of any periodic health examination for men and women beginning at age 20

Sources: <http://housing.k-state.edu/dining/FitCourse/toyourhealth/11-healthy skinmonth.html>,
http://www.aad.org/media/background/factsheets/fact_skincancer.html, <http://science.nationalgeographic.com/>