



Dispelling The Many Myths Associated With Sun Exposure



Even moderate exposure to the sun can cause severe damage to unprotected skin.

The arrival of summer is almost universally welcomed with open arms. After a long winter or rain-soaked spring, summer sun can be just what the doctor ordered.

But spending too much time in the sun can prove dangerous as well. Adding to those dangers is the common misconceptions associated with sun exposure, many of which give summer revelers a false sense of security when spending time outdoors. The following myths might be commonly believed, but that doesn't make them true.

*** Myth: Sunburns are only possible when it's really sunny. Even on an overcast day it's possible to suffer a severe sunburn. UV radiation can penetrate clouds, so be sure to check UV levels before heading outside, even if it doesn't appear as if the sun is out.**

• Myth: Certain skin types are safe from skin cancer. People with olive skin commonly feel as if they're immune to skin cancer. However, skin cancer knows no skin type, and everyone is at its

mercy when spending time outdoors without protection. While people with darker skin have a lesser risk of skin cancer than fair-skinned folks, that doesn't mean they are immune.

• Myth: Sun bathers are the only ones susceptible to skin cancer. Even normal, every day exposure to sun makes people susceptible to skin cancer. Sunburns can occur whether a person is walking the dog or washing the car. While sun bathers are at a greater risk, that reality doesn't make routine exposure any safer.

• Myth: Self tanners protect skin from the sun. Fake tans do not improve the body's ability to protect itself from the sun. Be sure to wear sun block even if skin has been darkened with a self tanner.

• Myth: My skin tans and doesn't burn, so I don't need sun-block. UV rays can damage living cells, and the skin often turns brown as a means of protecting itself from these harmful rays. So just because the skin turns

brown instead of red doesn't make it any more safe from the sun than skin that reddens upon exposure.

• Myth: Cosmetics that contain sunscreen provide adequate sun protection. Moisturizers and foundations with sunscreen can be adequate when the skin is exposed for very short periods of time. However, those planning to spend ample time outdoors should use a separate sunscreen to protect skin. Oftentimes, beau-

ty products that contain sunscreen have an sun protection factor far below the recommended SPF 30.

• Myth: Skin cancer is easily treated. Like all cancers, skin cancer can metastasize and spread to other parts of the body. What's more, there is no cure for skin cancer, and treatment options include surgery and chemotherapy. Any changes in the skin should immediately be reported to your physician.

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Recognizing The Signs Of Autism

Few child health issues have gotten more publicity in the 21st century than autism. A mental condition characterized by great difficulty forming relationships and communicating with other people, autism is present from early childhood.

For parents of young children or even expecting parents, the increased publicity of autism has left many wondering what they can do with respect to their own children. The Autism Society of America notes parents should be on the lookout for the following symptoms, and consult a physician should any of them begin to appear.

• Difficulty in mixing with others. At times, autism can be a heartbreaking disorder for a sufferer's loved ones, mainly due to the difficulty autistic children have in communicating and

befriending other children. Lacking the capacity to communicate with others is one of the more prevalent traits associated with autism. Parents of children who can't seem to mix with other children should consider consulting a physician.

• Inability verbalizing needs and wants. In lieu of speaking, autism sufferers often resort to pointing or gestures when expressing needs. While this is a common trait in many young children, it is abnormal for toddlers who have already developed language skills.

• Resistance to change. Autism sufferers insist on never breaking from their routine, a trait that was characterized in the 1988 film "Rain Man," where Dustin Hoffman's character is an adult with autism who strongly resists change and breaking from

his routine throughout the film.

• Not wanting to be cuddled or make eye contact. While these are separate traits, they both can be extremely difficult for parents to cope with, possibly making parents feel as though their child is not reciprocating their love. Children will react negatively to being hugged or cuddled and some autism sufferers refuse to make eye contact as well.

• Unresponsive to verbal cues. Children with autism often act as if they are deaf, despite hearing tests that show their hearing is in normal range.

To learn more, visit the Autism Society of America Web site at www.autism-society.org.

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Did You Know? Facts About Autism

- Autism costs the nation over \$35 billion per year, a figure expected to significantly increase in the next decade
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) states that autism now affects 1 in every 110 American children
- More children will be diagnosed with autism this year than with AIDS, diabetes and cancer combined
- There is no medical detection or cure for autism

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