



Lindo's
PHARMACY

Committed to your Health



Sun & Skin

☀️ **How does the sun affect our skin?**

One of the benefits of sunlight on our skin is the production of vitamin D, which is essential for strong bones. However, there are many harmful effects caused by the sun. The most obvious harm caused by the sun is wrinkling and sunburn, but in addition, it causes cataracts, skin texture changes and dilated blood vessels. Most importantly, it causes skin cancer.

☀️ **What is skin cancer?**

Skin cancer is uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in one of the layers of the skin. The three most common types are basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and malignant melanoma. The melanoma type of skin cancer can actually be fatal if not caught early enough. For this reason it's important to check your skin regularly for any abnormal growth or skin changes.

☀️ **What should one look for to detect early signs of skin cancer?**

It is important to watch out for any abnormal or sudden changes in moles, freckles, beauty marks, birth marks and note any open sores that have trouble healing, or heal and open up again. The sore may be itchy, painful and may bleed. The most important things to note in moles are any changes in its outline, color, size and symmetry. If you are unsure, do not hesitate to contact a doctor who specializes in skin lesions.

☀️ **What can one do to prevent skin cancer?**

The best thing to do is to stay out of the sun. When going outside it is important to wear protective, tightly woven clothing, sunglasses and a hat. In addition all exposed skin should be protected with sunscreen. It is especially important to avoid sunburn, but even a healthy-looking tan is a sign of permanent skin damage. In addition, for those taking medications, please check with your pharmacist to see if the pills you are taking could cause you to burn more easily.

Which medications can cause sun-sensitivity?

Many medications, both prescription and non-prescription can increase one's chance of burning. The most common prescription medications to cause this problem are tetracycline, sulfa and quinolone antibiotics, anti-fungals, some diabetes, anti-acne, anti-inflammatory medications, as well certain creams for acne, wrinkles, skin-discoloration, eczema and psoriasis. Even pills for blood-pressure, epilepsy and birth-control pills have sometimes caused this problem. Coal tar creams and shampoos are also known sensitizers, as are certain non-prescription anti-acne products containing benzoyl-peroxide, hydroquinone (used in skin bleaching creams), non-prescription antihistamines (present in many cold, cough and allergy medications) and pain-relievers (such as ibuprofen). Some food additives, food coloring, some artificial sweeteners, perfumes, dyes and even certain sunscreen products themselves can also cause the skin to be more photosensitive. Finally, herbal supplements can do the same thing, including St. John's Wort (used for depression), Dong Quai and Wormwood, to name a few. It is always good to speak to your pharmacist or doctor before taking any medication to ensure you know how to protect yourself. A fool-proof way to be safe in the sun, whether taking medication or not, is to always wear a sunscreen.

How does one choose and use a sunscreen?

A sunscreen is a chemical ingredient that absorbs UV radiation from the sun and prevents sunburn. In addition, there are sunblocks, ingredients which scatter, deflect and reflect sunlight off your skin. Sunblocks are the best way to protect your skin as they last longer. It is important to use a sunscreen/sunblock with SPF 15 or higher, and to apply enough onto your skin, at least 15 to 30 minutes before sun exposure and to reapply after swimming, towel drying, excessive sweating or prolonged sun-exposure. At least 30 ml (1 ounce) of sunscreen should be used for the whole body. Remember to protect your ears, neck, nose, exposed skin on the feet and lips.

What can one do to relieve sunburn?

The first thing to do is to avoid additional sun-exposure. It is helpful to drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids, take cool baths, and apply moisturizers (especially the ones containing aloe-vera and vitamin E). Calamine lotion can be applied, if needed. Topical antihistamines and anesthetics should be avoided as they can make the skin even more sensitive. It may be a good idea to take Advil, Motrin or any other brand of ibuprofen, as it can help reduce inflammation, redness and decrease the severity of injury to the skin.

Most importantly, BE SAFE IN THE SUN: talk to your pharmacist, seek shade, avoid sun, wear hats and sunglasses, cover up with protective clothing, use sunscreen/sunblock on body, face, ears and lips and reapply often. PARTICIPATE! Your life is worth it!

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