

UV Cancer Awareness

With the long days of summer quickly approaching, our sun exposure is likely to increase. While we indulge in outside activities, it is important to remember to protect our skin from the sun's potentially damaging ultraviolet (UV) radiation. UV exposure can cause more than just sunburn. Skin cancer, premature aging, and ocular damage all have been attributed to excessive time in the sun.

Three common types of skin cancer exist, each named after the type of cell from which it arises; basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma. More than 1 million cases of skin cancer are diagnosed annually.¹ According to the American Cancer Society, skin cancer is the most common of all cancers and accounts for nearly half of all cancers in the United States. One in five Americans will develop skin cancer in the course of a lifetime.² Extended sun exposure is the leading cause of skin cancer. The effects of sun exposure are cumulative, and contrary to popular belief 80 percent of a person's lifetime sun exposure is not acquired before age 18; only about 23 percent of lifetime exposure occurs by age 18.³ In 2004, approximately 34 percent of adults reported experiencing at least one sunburn in the previous year.⁴

Even though sun exposure may be unavoidable, sunburns are preventable. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends following the "ABCs" to prevent a sunburn. "A" stands for stay *away* from the sun in the middle of the day, "B" stands for *block* the sun's rays by using an SPF 15 or higher sunscreen, and "C" stands for *cover* up using protective clothing such as long sleeves and a hat.⁵ NSP Natria Sunscreen SPF 30 (Stock No. 6018-2) provides comprehensive UVA and UVB protection, and contains soothing plant extracts and antioxidants. Additional skin care products with sunscreen include: Natria Balancing Daily Defense Lotion SPF 15 (Stock No. 6006-8), Natria Nourishing Daily Defense Lotion SPF 15 (Stock No. 6005-2) and Natria Lip Balm SPF 15 (Stock No. 6019-0).

Despite the importance of the sun to vitamin D synthesis, getting vitamin D primarily from sun exposure is not advisable. When considering the best source of vitamin D, the American Academy of Dermatology says, "Get vitamin D safely through a healthy diet that may include vitamin supplements. Don't seek the sun."⁶ Sunscreen with an SPF of 8 can inhibit more than 95 percent of vitamin D synthesis in the skin, and our ability to manufacture vitamin D from sun exposure also declines with age.⁷ Experts are finding that most people would benefit from a greater amount of vitamin D than the Reference Daily Intake (RDI) of 400 IU. Considering the latest research on vitamin D, NSP Vitamin D3 (Stock No. 1155-1) provides a wonderful source of this needed nutrient. Each tablet supplies 2,000 IU.

Have fun this summer, and let NSP products protect you inside and out.

References:

1. American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts & Figures 2008*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2008.

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4. Armstrong, B.K., and A. Kricger, How much melanoma is caused by sun exposure?, *Melanoma Research*, 1993: 3:395-401.
5. Available at: <http://ymghealthinfo.org/content.asp?pageid=P02855>
6. Available at: <http://www.aad.org/public/sun/smart.html>
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