

SUN AND YOUR SKIN

How to Stay Safe

by B. Kay Sugg

After spending most of our time inside for the past few months due to Coronavirus-related mandates, we are all eager to spend a lot of time outside: at the beach, camping, hiking, or just barbecuing in our backyards. But don't exchange one risk for another; see the facts and information below to avoid the damaging effects of the sun.

Long wave Ultraviolet A (UVA) and short wave Ultraviolet B (UVB) are the harmful rays in sunlight. Many people will pay high prices for antiaging lotions and serums, yet do not stop to consider that damage from unprotected sun exposure can have the most aging and wrinkle-producing effect of all as well as creating damage that can lead to cancer.



UVA DAMAGE

UVA rays pass through the outer layers of skin (epidermis) and into the dermis where they damage the collagen and elastin contained there and generate free radicals. The result is premature skin aging (leathery skin), wrinkling, and damage that contributes to the development of certain skin cancers.

Of the ultraviolet rays that reach the ground, approximately 95% are UVA rays.

UVB DAMAGE

Although only about 5% of rays that reach the earth's surface are UVB rays, they cause direct damage to your DNA skin cells and are the principal causes of sunburn (unprotected skin burns in as little as 15 minutes) and most skin cancers, especially melanoma, the most deadly of the skin cancers.

Damage from ultraviolet radiation is cumulative: it builds up, and over time, results in mutations which causes skin cells to multiply rapidly and can lead to cancerous tumors.

Ultraviolet radiation can damage eyes by causing the cornea (on front of eye) to burn or become inflamed, skin cancer around the eyes, cataracts, and macular degeneration.



PROTECTION FROM UVA-UVB DAMAGE

- Wear sunglasses (year round) which have 100 percent Ultraviolet protection.
- Use sunscreen with a SPF of 30 (since it blocks nearly 97% of UVB radiation) and higher SPF-numbered products only give you marginally better protection. Look for label ingredients with at least 3% avobenzone or 15% zinc oxide (both block UVA). Reapply at least every two hours or more frequently if going into water.
- Wear sunscreen on cloudy days. Up to 80% of UVA rays can penetrate clouds and cause sunburn damage to skin.
- Avoid sun exposure at its most intense period—between 10 am and 4:00 pm.
- Apply vitamin E to skin after sun exposure to help prevent sunspots—flat brown spots which can develop after intense or long-term exposure to sun.
- Avoid wearing perfume while out in the sun since the sun can chemically change the perfume's ingredients and cause rashes and sunspots.
- Before a day of outdoor activities, check the UV Index (<https://www.epa.gov/sunsafety/uv-index-1>) which shows each day's ultraviolet radiation levels on a simple 1 to 11+ scale for specific times and location.
- If possible, wear clothing (hats, beach wear, t-shirts, etc.) with ultraviolet protection. Products with this seal meet stringent criteria for safe and effective UV protection.

Remember that a suntan is a sign that DNA damage has taken place and adds up over time to cause skin cancer. It is safer to achieve a tan using a spray tan or self-tanning lotions.



Sources: American Cancer Society, www.cancer.org • The Skin Cancer Foundation, www.skincancer.org



Ingredients

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup sugar
- 4-5 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 4 cups of water

Summer THYME LEMONADE

Nothing says summertime like a refreshing cup of freshly-made lemonade. We found an even better version of it, that includes Thyme, for that extra goodness that only fresh herbs contribute. Enjoy!

Instructions

Make Simple Syrup:

In a small saucepan set over medium heat, add sugar and thyme to 1 cup of water and stir until sugar is dissolved. Allow simple syrup to cool slightly.

Make Lemonade:

In a pitcher, add simple syrup, lemon juice and 4 cups of water (more or less water to adjust to your taste). Stir to combine. Serve lemonade over ice, garnished with additional thyme sprigs and lemon slices if desired.

Variations:

Various fresh herbs, such as rosemary or basil, would be lovely in this lemonade, as well. Experiment with the strength of the lemon flavor. Add more lemon juice, water or sugar to adjust to your personal taste.

To turn this lemonade into an instant Summer cocktail, add a splash of vodka, tequila or even champagne.

Source: Oh The Lovely Things, www.ohthelovelythings.com

