



Season's Greetings

December 2011 Edition

Sunscreen: Myth vs. Fact

Myth: The amount of sunscreen you use doesn't matter, as long as you use it.

Fact: Sunscreen should be reapplied at regular appropriate intervals. It is best to apply 15-20 minutes before going outside to allow it time to be absorbed into the skin.

Myth: Sunscreen is unnecessary on cloudy days and inside.

Fact: 80% of the sun's ultraviolet rays can pass through clouds. Some UV rays can penetrate windows as well.

Myth: Sunscreen blocks the body from absorbing Vitamin D.

Fact: Using sunscreen does not block the body's ability to make vitamin D. In fact, most people get enough sun exposure, doing everyday outdoor activities, to provide more than enough sun exposure for vitamin D development.



A Substance From Bacteria Can Lead To Allergy-Free Sunscreen

As the realisation that radiation emitted by the sun can give rise to skin cancer becomes more widespread, so also has the use of sunscreen creams. These creams however, can give rise to contact allergy when exposed to the sun, and this has led to an increasing incidence of skin allergy. Scientists at the University of Gothenburg and Chalmers University of Technology are leading the hunt for a natural UV filter that does not have undesired effects.

"Unfortunately, several of the chemical UV filters used in sunscreens cause contact allergy, either of themselves or when they are exposed to sunlight. We have therefore studied a UV filter, scytonemin, that is found in certain bacteria. We have managed to produce this substance artificially in the laboratory", says Isabella Karlsson, researcher in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Gothenburg.

Sunlight contains two types of UV radiation. The type known as "UVA" penetrates deeply into the skin and causes the pigment that we already have to darken. UVA however, also causes the skin to age prematurely. Isabella Karlsson has shown that certain sunscreen chemicals break down in UV light to form several different products. One group of substances, the "arylglyoxals", are very potent contact allergens.

"We tested 172 patients with suspected skin reactions to sunscreen creams and/or the drug ketoprofen in one of our studies. It turned out that 23 of these patients reacted to the UV filter. Five of them were diagnosed with contact allergy and the other 18 with photocontact allergy."

Scytonemin is produced by cyanobacteria that live in habitats exposed to very strong sunlight. Scytonemin absorbs UV light and thus protects the bacteria from being damaged by the sun's radiation. More research will be required, however, before it can be added to sunscreen creams.

In the meantime **Allergy Canada** has **Vanicream sunscreens in 30, 35 and 60 SPF**. These sunscreens are formulated with high protection from the sun without the use of dyes, fragrances or sensitizing chemicals. Don't forget to get some for the snowbirds, to take along on December holiday trips and during winter sports like skiing and skating.

December Special take 10% off Vanicream Sunscreens*



*Valid for 30, 35-Sport and 60 SPF values. Offer valid until December 31, 2011 for phone or online orders. Can not be combined with any other promotion.