

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM ULTRA VIOLET LIGHT

By Barbara Menendez

Summer is a time of sunshine, beaches, fresh produce and activity. Many people vacation during the summer, taking the opportunity to catch up with family and friends. It is a great time for parties and barbecues, picnics and pool parties. It is also a wonderful opportunity to renew and restate your health goals for the months ahead.

As you know eating well and exercising are important components to maintaining a healthy body. But while paying close attention to what you do for your internal environment, be mindful about what is happening on your external environment.

While spending time outdoors this summer, be sure to protect yourself from the harmful rays of the sun. Sunburn is better prevented than treated and its effects can last a lot longer than a few days. Skin cancer is directly related to the amount of sun exposure a person endures. Ultraviolet A and B (long and short wavelengths of ultraviolet light) are responsible for burning and cancerous changes in the skin. Sunscreen, protective clothing and ultraviolet-protected sunglasses (UV light has been implicated in the development of cataracts) are all recommended to prevent excessive exposure.

Effective sunscreens are available in a variety of strengths. I recommend you use a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Sunscreen should be applied generously and re-applied after swimming or sweating. For added protection, you should also wear a hat when spending long periods of time outdoors. If however, you are reading this after you have gotten a sun-burn, try the following suggestions to get some relief:

~ Take a cool shower or bath or place a cool, wet towel on the burn

~ Avoid products that contain benzocaine, lidocaine or petroleum (like Vaseline)

~ If blisters develop, dry bandages may help to prevent infections.

~ If your skin is not blistering, moisturizing cream can be applied to relieve discomfort.

~ Over the counter pain medications, such as Advil or Motrin may be helpful to relieve the pain. (Do not use aspirin products in children running a fever).

Barbara Mendez is a registered pharmacist and nutritional consultant in private practice in New York City. She is also the in-house nutritionist for the Harvard Club. For more information on Barbara, please go to her website at www.lifestylenutrients.net Barbara is available for corporate lectures.