

6 Ways to Protect Your Skin

Too much sunlight is a prescription for things you don't want: looking older and an increased risk for skin cancer. The sun's toll on your skin includes loss of elasticity, wrinkles, dryness, age spots and solar keratosis. These rough pink-red or flesh-colored spots usually begin to appear around middle age.

Of course, skin cancer is the greatest threat posed by sun exposure. It is the most common type of cancer in the United States and includes basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma.

To reduce your risk for skin cancer and to keep your skin looking younger, the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) recommends that you be "sun-smart":

1



Apply a liberal amount of sunscreen on all exposed skin. Pick one that is broad-spectrum, water-resistant, and SPF 30 or higher. "Broad-spectrum" guards against both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays. Reapply about every two hours, even if it's cloudy, and after swimming or sweating.

Wear protective clothing, such as a long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses.



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Seek shade when you should. The sun's rays are strongest from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

4



Use extra caution near water, snow and sand. They reflect and worsen the damaging rays of the sun, increasing the odds of sunburn.

Get vitamin D through a healthy diet that may include supplements. While sun exposure can help your body make vitamin D, the AAD warns that this could increase your risk for cancer.

5



6



Check your birthday suit on your birthday. If you notice anything on your skin changing, growing or bleeding, see a dermatologist.