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Practicing in Boca Raton and the Surrounding Community Since 1979

SUMMER 2021 - NEWSLETTER

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Sunscreens, Cancer Causing Agents & *Consumer Reports* Recommendations

It's summer so we're spending more time outside exposed to the sun. We have been educated to apply sunscreen to our skin a good 30-minutes prior to sun exposure. Studies have shown that using a sunscreen of SPF 15 or greater daily can reduce the risk of squamous cell cancer by 40% and melanoma by 50%.

For this reason, we should start using sunscreen on infants and children six months or older. Research studies produced last year revealed that many of the ultraviolet light protecting chemicals in sunscreens were absorbed through the skin producing high blood levels for days. No one knows the long-term effects of this absorption. For this reason, many physicians recommend using sunscreens containing non absorbable zinc and titanium instead - especially on kids.

Unfortunately, disturbing news has recently been released. Valisure, an online pharmacy that tests all the products it sells found the cancer-causing agent benzene in 27% of the sunscreen products it tested. This included popular well-known name brands. Valisure petitioned the FDA to remove these products from the market and investigate their manufacturing process. No amount of benzene is safe and these products had > six parts per million of benzene. The full list of benzene free sunscreens is listed online at Valisure FDA petition attachment A.

When looking for mineral sunscreen, not containing benzene, for my grandchildren, I cross-checked *Consumer Reports* suggestions with Valisure's lists. I then purchased Badger Broad Spectrum Sunscreen SPF 30 for kids selling for about \$18 on Amazon. California Kids Supersensitive Tinted SPF 30 selling for \$35-\$45 a tube is an excellent choice as well - but pricey.

Their number one rated chemical sunscreen is Equate Sports Lotion SPF 50 selling for \$4 at Walmart. Hawaiian Tropic Island Sport Spray SPF 30 and Alba Botanical Hawaiian Coconut Clear Spray are their second and third choices.

Those of us interested in protecting our skin reach for the bottle of sunscreen we have on hand. But a third of sunscreen users do not look to see if the product has expired. [The ingredients in sunscreen do expire and become ineffective so check the date of expiration.](#)

Heat-Related Illness

It is summertime and the heat and humidity are higher than at any other time of the year, making us more susceptible to heat related illness. Heat related illness occurs when your body cannot keep itself cool. As the air temperature rises, your body cools off by sweating. Sweating occurs when liquid on your skin surface evaporates. On hot humid days, the evaporation of moisture is slowed down by the increased moisture in the air. When sweating cannot cool you down your body temperature rises and you may become ill.

Some people are at greater risk to develop heat related illness than others. This includes people 65 years of age or older, people with mental illness taking medications and the physically ill; especially those with heart disease, high blood pressure and lung disease. Individuals who have suffered from heat exhaustion or heat stroke in the past have an increased risk of developing recurrent heat illnesses.

When your body overheats due to extremely hot weather and or exercise in the heat, you are susceptible to heat exhaustion. Patients experience heavy sweating, non-specific weakness and or confusion, dizziness, nausea, headache, rapid heartbeat and dark very concentrated urine.

If you experience these symptoms in the heat you need to get out of the heat quickly. Find an air-conditioned building and rest in it. If you cannot find an air-conditioned building then get into the shade and out of the sun. Start drinking cool liquids (avoid caffeine and alcohol which exacerbate fluid loss and heat related disease). Take a cool shower or bath or apply cool water to your skin. Remove any tight constricting clothing. If you do not feel better within 30 minutes you must contact your physician or seek emergency help.

Untreated or inadequately treated heat exhaustion can progress to heatstroke. Heatstroke occurs when the internal body temperature rises to 104 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Heatstroke is far more serious than heat exhaustion. It can cause damage to your internal organs and brain and, it can kill you. Patients with heatstroke are running a fever of 104 degrees or higher. They complain of severe headaches with a dizzy or lightheaded feeling. Their skin is flushed or red in appearance and they are NOT sweating. Many will be experiencing severe and painful muscle cramps accompanied by nausea and vomiting. Their heartbeats are rapid, their blood pressure low. They may be agitated, anxious and disoriented with some experiencing epileptic type seizures.

Heatstroke is a medical emergency and you must call 911 immediately. While you are waiting for help to arrive remove their clothing after taking the patient to an air conditioned or shady place. Wet the skin with water and fan the skin if possible. If you have access to ice or ice packs place them on the patient's neck, back, groin and armpits while waiting for help.

Heat illness is preventable. When the heat index is over 90 and you must go outside wear lightweight, light-colored, loose fitting clothing. Wear a hat or use an umbrella. Apply sunscreen SPF 30 or greater 15-20 minutes BEFORE going outside. Drink plenty of water before you go out and 2-4 glasses of cool water each hour you are outside working in the heat. Avoid alcohol and caffeine including soda with caffeine. Take frequent breaks every 20 minutes and drink water or sports drink even if you do not feel thirsty. Try to schedule your outside work for before 10 a.m. or after 6 p.m. to avoid peak sun exposure.

If you are being treated for chronic medical conditions, ask your doctor how to prevent heat illness. Antihistamines, some blood pressure medications (beta-blockers and vasoconstrictors), diet pills, anti-depressants and antipsychotics impair your ability to control your internal body temperature. Water pills to prevent excessive fluid lead to dehydration. Anti-epilepsy and anti-seizure medicines impair your body's ability to regulate internal temperatures as well.

The Heat Index

The heat index combines humidity with the temperature. When you are standing in the sun the heat index is even higher. A heat index of 90 or greater is considered dangerous.

Summer Insects, Ticks & Insect Repellent

As our climate warms, and we enter the summer season, the pathogens we face taking a walk outside have changed as well. Recently in the northeastern US an individual walking through a well-manicured

lawn in the midday sun was bitten by a type of disease spreading tick called the worrying long-horned tick never before seen in that region. Ticks primarily attacked in shaded areas with long uncut grass and shrubs. This is a new distribution of tick locations and behavior. Mosquito borne diseases such as zika, Chickengunya fever and even Yellow Fever are common in the Caribbean and parts of Central and South America.

Consumer Reports has previously emphasized that its top-rated products all contained either DEET, Picardin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. DEET should have a concentration of 25-30% to be most effective and is considered safe at that strength. Picardin is a synthetic relative of the black pepper plant and is suggested in the 20% range. Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus should be in the 30% range.

Interestingly, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, a natural occurring product, is the only chemical not yet tested for safety in young children. It consequently should not be used in children three years of age or younger. Sprays were felt to be more effective than creams or lotions. In all cases they recommend spraying it on exposed skin and the outside of clothing - never on the skin under areas covered by clothing. Don't use the product near food and wash your hands after applying.

Their top two rated products were Total Home (CVS) Woodland Scent Insect Repellent, an aerosol spray containing 30% DEET and selling for \$6.50 and Off Deep Woods Insect Repellent VIII Dry for \$8.50 containing 25% DEET. Rated right below these two was Repel and Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus pump spray for \$7 a bottle.

Consumer Reports has stopped testing products for Tick effectiveness because in the past they found that DEET and Picardin products which protected against mosquitoes also protected against tick bites. They emphasized wearing shoes and socks, long pants and sleeves and spraying insecticide externally on the clothing helped protect against tick bites. They advised seeing a physician quickly if you contract a tick bite. They additionally discussed the fact that many of these recommended insect products stained the very clothing you applied it to as protection. These warnings are listed in their product ratings.

Hurricane Season: Health Related Preparations

The 2021 hurricane season is officially underway. We suggest the following preparations especially since we have not had a direct hit locally in over a decade and most of the local residents have not lived through a hurricane experience.

- a. Create a Hurricane Plan.
- b. Decide well in advance if you plan to stay in your home or evacuate.
- c. If you decide to leave plan to leave days in advance of the storm.
- d. Create a plan to communicate with loved ones and friends.
- e. Have a plan to protect your home, property and pets.
- f. If you require a special needs shelter you must download the application at pbc.gov special needs program application and mail it to the Special Needs Coordinator, 20 South Military Trail, West Palm Beach, FL 33415.
- g. Assemble a two-week supply of food, water, medicine and other needed items. Even if FEMA and local authorities respond rapidly you may need several weeks of supplies to sustain yourself before their help is available.

The office phone numbers will be forwarded to another location out of the area. If there is electricity and phone service, we should be reachable at 561.368.0191. If that does not work, call my satellite phone at 1.254.240.9301. Satellite phones require me to be outside with the antennae pointed towards the stars. Leave a message and I will be checking the voicemail frequently.

Hospital emergency rooms will be open before and after the storm. The Emergency Departments lock down and shut down during the storm. The Emergency Medical Services 911 paramedics will not be allowed to drive once the winds reach 35 MPH. Boca Raton Regional Hospital is now staffed with full time residents in medicine and surgery so there will be doctors at the hospital to care for arrivals and inpatients during and after the storm until your personal physician can assume care. With communications down in the storm aftermath the hospitals have sent police officers to their homes if they need the doctor to come to the hospital. The office will open for services as soon as electricity is restored, the fire sensing equipment is functional and the Fire Marshall permits the reopening of the building.

Hurricane Season – Phone Outages

As hurricane season approaches, I'd like to remind you that if your regular telephone and cell phone service are out of order, you can reach me by calling my satellite phone. That number is 1.254.240.9301.

Referrals Are Always Appreciated

The greatest compliment you can provide is to refer someone who, like you, would benefit from more personalized care and attention. We appreciate every referral we receive and vow to continue to provide to every patient the highest quality care and individual attention in a professional, relaxed setting.

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