Secrets of Sunscreen

Recent studies on sunscreens have suggested they may contain harmful ingredients, including retinyl palmitate, nanoparticles and oxybenzone. The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) and the FDA have reviewed the studies and determined the ingredients in question are not harmful.

If you remain concerned about these ingredients, you may find sunscreens without them. Just check the labels – and look for these additional factors:

- Sunscreens labeled broad-spectrum are best because they protect against both ultraviolet A (UVA) rays, which cause tanning and skin aging, and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays, which cause sunburn. Both A and B can cause skin cancer.
- The AAD recommends using sunscreen with an SPF 30 or more, especially if you have fair skin or have long periods of sun exposure.
- Regardless of a product’s SPF, all labels must tell users to reapply sunscreen every 2 hours during sun exposure.
- You won’t find the words waterproof, sweatproof and sunblock on labels any longer. Instead, products may now state if they are water- or sweat-resistant.

Take the “Ouch!” Out of Exercise

One way to avoid injury during exercise is to know your weak spots. Knee, back or hip problems? It’s a good idea to meet with your health care provider or exercise professional to determine the right workout for you – before you start a new exercise routine.

You may need to avoid high-impact activities such as hiking, tennis or treadmill jogging in favor of moderate swimming, biking or walking. A cautious plan that progresses gradually can help protect your vulnerable areas, build muscle and in turn prevent strains and sprains.

Best insurance for your body: More muscle. Regardless of your age or fitness level, adding muscle through strength training can significantly reduce your risk of injury during any physical activity. Strength training 2 to 3 days a week can protect your muscles, bones and connective tissues (tendons and ligaments). As strength increases, risk of injury decreases.

For example, your knees are highly susceptible to damage, given that they bear most of your body weight when you’re just standing. The additional impact of an aggressive workout on your knees can be hazardous. But stronger muscles and connective tissues surrounding the knee increase joint stability and help prevent injury. In the same way, strengthening low-back muscles reduces back strain during exercise and other physical demands.

The big bonus of added muscle – it has the potential to reduce the pain from backache or achy joints.

Don’t wait until weakness and pain set in – with your health care provider’s guidance, start strength training now. You’ll be rewarded for years to come.
Fabulous Fish! By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Versatile, nutritious and delicious – fish is a great addition to any meal. Whether you flake canned salmon into a salad, barbeque some tilapia, or prepare a hearty chowder, fish is a great source of protein, and contains beneficial fats that are important for cardiovascular health.

Fish contain DHA and EPA, two types of omega-3 fat that help combat heart disease by reducing high blood pressure and triglyceride levels. All fish have some DHA and EPA, but Arctic char, herring, rainbow trout, salmon and sardines have the highest amounts.

**Bonus:** These fish are also low in mercury. This organic compound can cause methylmercury poisoning if over consumed, and lead to symptoms such as impaired vision, muscle weakness and speech impairments.

**Other low-mercury fish** include tilapia, pollock, catfish, sole and haddock, though they are not as high in omega-3 fats as the fish listed above.

**Avoid or limit intake** of fish that are high in mercury, such as shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tilefish, escolar, marlin and orange roughy.

**Tuna tip:** The mercury content of tuna varies widely. Limit intake of fresh tuna steaks. When choosing canned tuna, opt for “light” (skipjack) instead of “white” (albacore) as it has the lowest mercury content. The FDA recommends that women who are or might become pregnant, nursing mothers and young children consume no more than 12 ounces of canned light tuna or 6 ounces of albacore per week.

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**Mid-Year Checkup**

You can do a lot to live a long and healthy life. Even a small step such as exercising an extra 10 minutes every day helps.

How are you shaping up so far this year?

- I am tobacco-free.
- I maintain a healthy weight.
- I get a yearly flu shot.
- I exercise at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
- I fill half of my plate with fruits and vegetables at every meal.
- I fill one quarter of my plate with grains at every meal. At least half of the grains I eat daily are whole grain. I fill the other quarter of my plate with fatty fish, lean red meat and poultry, beans, legumes and nuts.
- I have my blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol checked as my health care provider advises.
- I am screened for cancer according to my provider's advice.
- I make sure my provider knows my health history.
- I take medications as directed.

**How many did you check?** Review this list with your provider. Your provider can help you find solutions that fit your personal needs. It’s an easy step on the path to better health for life.

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**60 Minutes to Less Stress**

Are you struggling to relieve the stress in your life?

Stress could be jeopardizing your health if:

- You try your best but still feel trapped by situations you can’t seem to change.
- You feel unhappy or anxious – not just for a few days but for weeks.
- You feel or express anger or irritability more than usual.

Before stress harms your health or the quality of your work or relationships, here’s a 2-part coping strategy sure to restore balance in your life. It may become the best 60 minutes of your day.

1. For 2 weeks, spend 30 minutes a day reviewing what’s making you feel uptight. Maybe it’s worry about bills or a difficult relationship at work. Write down the likely sources and seek solutions to those situations that are fixable. If you tend to dwell on problems, writing them down may help you “see” the situation is not truly critical.

Remember, the way you perceive your circumstances plays a big part in how you react to them. This 30-minute routine may help you feel more in control, so you can leave the worry and tension behind.

2. Spend 30 minutes exercising to feel less stress. Exercise can reduce stress in several ways. A 30-minute walk or cardio machine workout is a proven stress reliever. Nonstop exercise releases endorphins in your brain that heighten positive emotions.

If you’ve had a rough day, going for a refreshing sprint or taking out your frustration on the weights or a rowing machine is one sure way that puts you in charge. You can’t beat exercise for improving your mental health.

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Cooking Tip: Wraps and salads make super warm weather meals – no cooking! Why not combine them? Favorite foods for stuffing include leftover chicken, turkey and seafood; cooked rice or beans; shredded cabbage or carrots; arugula leaves; sliced tomato; avocado or apple.

Flavor them with salsa, crumbled feta or yogurt-herb dressing. Wrap them up with any kind of whole-grain flat or pita bread, crepes or tortillas. Or try rice paper or sturdy lettuce leaves.

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Smart Moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/July13tools.

Next Month: Immunizations