

Exercising in the Warmer Weather

With warmer and longer days finally here, we are bound to be spending more time outdoors, which means more sun and heat exposure. Spending recreational time during the summer can be more enjoyable with just a few precautionary measures.

Sunburn

Sunburn results from an over exposure of the skin to Ultraviolet (UV) rays found in sunlight. These rays damage the skin by creating free radicals through the process of photo-oxidation. This weakens the skin's elasticity causing premature aging and wrinkles. No one is immune from the oxidative effects of UV rays. Even dark skinned persons run the risk of sunburn. Especially at risk are fair skinned, blue-eyed blondes, and redheads.

Types of UV Rays

There are basically two types of UV rays. UVA and UVB. UVB rays are absorbed at the surface of the skin and are high intensity rays. These rays are the cause of sunburn and create immediate skin damage. UVA rays on the other hand are of lower intensity, and they penetrate below the skin's surface, causing long-term damage such as premature wrinkles.

Signs

The common signs of sunburn include redness (lobster color) pain, swelling, and sometimes blistering. Several days later the skin is likely to begin peeling. Pain does not usually occur until 24 –48 hours later and can be extremely uncomfortable.

Prevention

*The sun's ultraviolet rays are strongest between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. If possible avoid heavy sun exposure during these times.

*Using a topical sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or greater is your best insurance if you are out during prime hours. A waterproof sunscreen is preferred for those who exercise or swim.

*Do not be deceived by cloud cover. You can burn just as easily on cloudy days.

*Sunlamps, tanning beds, reflectors and other such devices should be avoided as they produce excessive amounts of UV rays.

*Some medications such as Tetracycline and Sulfa may produce side effects such as allergic type rashes when combined with ultra

violet rays of the sun.

*Wear wide brimmed hats and sunglasses to help avoid UV rays.

*Clothing should be light in color and loose fitting. Dark colors attract the light and draw more heat toward the body.

Treatment

*Cool wet compresses, (not ice) should be used for the first 24 –48 hours.

*Topical Aloe Vera gel is beneficial in the first 48 hours to help reduce inflammation and burning.

*Avoid all moisturizing lotions or petroleum products for the first 48 hours. These trap the heat and do not allow the skin to breathe easily.

*Drink lots and lots of water to help re-hydrate the skin.

*Should you experience fever, dizziness, blisters or other unusual symptoms please seek medical attention.

Long Term Effects

Up to 700,000 cases of skin cancer show up on the medical radar per year. Solar Keratoses, (flat, scaly, reddish patches) is a common condition to sun worshippers. These can sometimes be precancerous leading ultimately to skin cancer.

Other Considerations - Dehydration

Your body is 80% percent water and functions best when at this capacity. Even the slightest level of dehydration can cause a variety of symptoms from fatigue to achy joints. Here are some outdoor hydration pointers.

Do not just drink while you are active. Hydration begins from the moment you wake to the evening. It is important to drink throughout the whole day, but especially when engaged in outdoor warm weather activity.

If you are thirsty or "Cotton mouth" you are already dehydrated. Do not wait until you are thirsty to drink. Your goal should be to drink frequently enough so as you never feel thirsty.