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Facing up to sun

As temperatures rise this summer, it's even more important to protect your skin from the sun. Here's our guide to the best products on offer

Words by health writer Susie Perry

NON-MELANOMA skin cancer (NMSC) is on the increase with more than 62,000 new cases registered each year. These worrying statistics highlight the fact that there is no time like the present to learn how to protect your skin. Although your skin forms only the outermost layer of your body it is still strongly influenced by the types of foods that you eat. A diet that is high in saturated fat, alcohol, salt, sugar and artificial additives does not encourage good skin tone and health. Boosting water, antioxidants, vitamin C and essential fatty acids helps to increase your body's ability to correct and protect from UV damage.

Colourful antioxidants

Anti-oxidants help to mop up free radicals generated by UV exposure protecting cells from skin cancer. Foods rich in anti-oxidant nutrients tend to be the colourful fruits and vegetables - beetroot, blueberries, carrots, peas, red currants, black currants, peppers and squashes.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is required for the formation of collagen, which functions to improve skin tone and elasticity. This vitamin is water soluble which means that daily requirements must be met through adequate daily dietary intake.

Drink a glass of freshly squeezed orange or grapefruit juice a day and increase fresh parsley and spinach in your lunch time salads to boost your vitamin C levels.

Cut back on caffeine

Caffeine is a diuretic encouraging body and skin dehydration. Keeping your skin hydrated by increasing intake of filtered water which helps to plump up skin cells and prevent wrinkles. If you find water gets a little boring then swap tea and coffee for green tea, which is rich in anti-oxidants and contains nutrients which are known to improve skin health.

Safe sun screens for beautiful skin

One way to avoid adding chemicals to your skin is to opt for a natural and organic sun screen range and use this on your face, neck and hands all year round. The best products on the market, from Green People, are available in SPF 8, 15 and 22, and are formulated from 100% natural plant extracts. It includes Titanium oxide for UVA and UVB screening plus natural antioxidants for cellular protection and vitamins B2 and tyrosine, which act as natural tanning accelerators. I used these products on a two-week holiday in scorching Goa, India, and became a complete convert due to the fact that I developed my best tan ever!



For the perfect tanning companion also try Green People's After Sun Lotion, which contains herbal extracts of aloe vera, lavender and calendula to soothe sensitive skin, echinacea, olive leaf and green tea to heal and protect skin cells, plus sunflower, olive and apricot kernel oils to moisturise and prevent skin dehydration and corn mint extract for skin cooling and freshness.

To buy online visit www.greenpeople.co.uk or mail order on 08702 401444

Don't forget to protect your hair

Don't ruin your natural sun-kissed image with streaky dry sun bleached hair.

To prevent ginger streaks if you are a brunette and to prevent your hair getting that frazzled, dried-out effect from UV damage, add a small amount of the Realine UV Protection Supplement to your conditioner or run a small amount through your hair just before sunbathing or going to the beach.

At £20 it's cheaper than a new hair cut and colour, and is a convenient enough size to slip into any beach bag. For stockists and details call 020 75890877

Evian Summer Freshness

We all know how important it is to stay hydrated through the summer months but Evian have taken hydration one step further with a wonderfully refreshing Evian Facial Spray. Spraying your face a couple of times an hour whilst sunbathing helps to reduce the surface temperature of your skin, protecting skin cells from heat damage. The fine mist also helps to lift away surface sweat containing toxins capable of contributing to skin irritation and blemishes. Evian Facial Spray is available from Boots.