

# Jeni's Health & Fitness Tips

To view previous newsletters go to [www.advancedhealthfitness.com.au](http://www.advancedhealthfitness.com.au)

Issue 66 / Oct. 2011

---

Hi Everyone!

Summer is just around the corner, and with the warmer weather approaching, we think of enjoying the great outdoors and perhaps the need for protecting our skin from the sun. Exposure to some sunlight is essential for good health. The ideal amount of exposure depends upon the natural colour of your skin, the time of day and the time of year. However, as a rough guide line; never stay out in the sun long enough for your skin to redden. It is better to plan outdoor activities in the morning or late afternoon during the summer months when the sun's rays are less intense.

As for using sunscreen, I personally prefer to cover up with long sleeved clothing and try and keep in the shade where possible rather than slap on loads of sunscreen lotion. Many sunscreens contain toxic chemicals. Some of these chemicals have minimal toxicological effects when applied to the skin, however when they get heated by sunlight, reactions occur between the sunscreen's active and inactive ingredients and the skin. In one study, all the chemicals commonly found in sunscreens were tested and all were found to penetrate the skin. Our skin is very capable to absorbing various nutrients directly, as well as chemicals. This is particularly relevant to young children who are more vulnerable to toxins.

Reading an article written by Dr Peter Dingle (BEd, BSc, PhD) I learnt that many epidemiological studies show an increased risk of skin cancer to the sunscreen user. In a review of studies by Science News, those who used sunscreen were more likely to develop basal cell cancer than those who did not. Five out of ten studies concluded that those who used sunscreen were more likely to develop melanoma and three studies found no association between melanoma and sunscreen use. Two studies found sunscreen users were protected. A study from Sweden of patients diagnosed with malignant melanoma, showed significantly increased risk for having developed the disease after regular sunscreen use. So there is no conclusive evidence that sunscreen will protect your skin from cancer – the jury is still out on this one.

Although these results may have occurred because they deal with people who are regularly exposing themselves to the sun, the possibility remains that the sunscreen used may be contributing to skin cancers. In fact, the toxic chemicals in sunscreens could constitute a potential mechanism for the development of skin cancers.

In his article, Dr. Dingle lists many of the chemicals found in sunscreens and the toxic effects on the body. If you would like a copy of this detailed article, just let me know and I can email you the full report.

There are regulations that ensure that sunscreens prevent sunburn, however in Australia, there is no requirement for manufacturers to determine long term safety. Sunscreen is classified as cosmetic and is therefore not regulated by the Therapeutic Goods Act (1989). I have heard of laboratory experiments conducted in several tropical regions that show, even at extremely low concentrations, sunscreens cause complete bleaching of hard corals. I wonder what effect they have on our bodies.

So this summer when you purchase sunscreen, choose those who list all the ingredients. This list will be at least 10 items long. Or better still, choose those made from natural ingredients such as green tea and black tea gel. Sunscreens made from the foods we eat will be safer to use.

Sunscreen should be used in conjunction with protective clothing, a hat and sunglasses. Using sunscreen should not be considered a safe way to spend all day in the sun.

Finally, eat lots of fruit, vegetables, seeds, nuts and beans to increase your body's ability to repair damaged skin. This will also help prevent chronic illnesses of all types. Enjoy the great outdoors. Spending time outdoors is really beneficial to your wellbeing.

Yours in health,

*Jeni*