



The Beacon

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Med-Cert Medical Management Resources

“Guiding your way to better health management”

Summer Skin SOS

As anyone who's ever had a scorching sunburn or a nasty case of poison ivy can attest, summer can be hard on skin. Luckily, most of the summer skin care damage is easy to remedy. Here are fast fixes and summer skin care tips for five common seasonal snafus, plus steps to safeguard your skin through Labor Day and beyond.

Breakouts

The Problem You're breaking out on your back, shoulders, and chest, and your regular soap isn't helping.

The Fix Wash with a body cleanser that contains benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid, ingredients that unblock pores and dry up excess oil. (Don't scrub; it may inflame skin.) Try Neutrogena Body Clear Body Scrub (\$6; drugstores). To prevent breakouts, dust talcum powder on your back and chest to help absorb perspiration, and look for oil-free products that are labeled *noncomedogenic*, which means they won't clog pores. Avoid form-fitting clothes that hold heat and moisture close to your skin, and change into fresh gear ASAP after perspiring heavily.

Sunburn

The Problem You got caught up in the excitement of your kid's Little League tournament and forgot to reapply sunscreen. Now your skin is beet red.

The Fix Avoid the sun until the skin has healed completely. Sunburned skin temporarily loses its protective barrier, so it's more susceptible to subsequent burns.

To reduce inflammation and pain, pop an aspirin and take as directed until the burn fades. Soaking in a bath of cool or lukewarm water laced with a handful of baking soda will also ease the burn. Afterward, gently pat on a topical over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream to help reduce swelling. Try not to pick or peel skin that's beginning to flake; those dry patches protect forming skin from the environment. Next time, wear a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 and reapply every 2 hours.

Ingrown Hairs

The Problem Your quest for an ultra close shave left you with ingrown hairs around your bikini line.

The Fix Wash with an anti-bacterial soap to quell inflammation. Gentle use of a loofah or washcloth every other day will help dislodge trapped hairs and prevent their return. For a chronic case, try Bliss Ingrown Hair Eliminating Peeling Pads (\$35; Bliss) or Tend Skin (\$20; Sephora); both contain salicylic acid, an exfoliant that keeps ingrowns at bay. In the future, shave in the bath or shower; the water plumps up hair, making it easier to cut. Change blades as soon as you feel any pull or drag--a dull blade is more likely to cause ingrown hairs.

Poison Ivy

The Problem That "grass" you rested in after your hike was poison ivy, and now you can't stop itching.

The Fix Treat mild rashes with hydrocortisone cream. Bathing in tepid water with 1 cup of oatmeal may also alleviate the misery. If that's not enough, take an antihistamine such as Benadryl. Because heat and sweating can aggravate the itch, stay as cool as possible. See your doctor if the rash is on your face or genitals, is blistering or oozing, or doesn't improve after a week of self-treatment. On future outdoor adventures, steer clear of plants that have three shiny leaves coming from a central stem. If you act quickly to wash the plant's oily resin off your skin (it becomes irreversibly bound within 15 minutes of exposure), you can prevent or minimize a reaction.

Dry Skin

The Problem A beach vacation left your skin looking and feeling drier than a desert.

The Fix After swimming, rinse with fresh water to remove any salt or chlorine buildup, which can further dry out and irritate skin. Keep subsequent baths and showers short (no longer than 5 minutes) and use a mild cleanser and warm water. Gently use a loofah, washcloth, or exfoliating scrub to slough off dead cells. After bathing, towel-dry and moisturize immediately with a rich

lotion. You need to seal in the moisture while you're still slightly damp.

The Perfect Bath Towel

A top-quality bath towel can serve you well for 10 years or more. *What to look for...*

Fiber. Cotton naturally attracts water, so the best fiber for absorbing water is 100% cotton. Synthetics repel water, so cotton-polyester blends are less absorbent and should be avoided.

Weight. The heavier the towel, the more absorbent and durable. The highest-quality towels are made of cotton grown and woven in Turkey with 800 grams per square meter weight. Egyptian-cotton towels have 300 to 600 gram weight. Pima cotton from Arizona and California is woven at 300 to 700 gram weight.

Weave. Look closely at a towel and you will see the fiber is woven in loops. The longer the loops, the more absorbent. When the loops are shaved, the result is "velour," which has a velvety feel but much reduced absorbency.

Color. Darker towels fade over time, so opt for lighter colors. *Best:* White - it never fades, takes the strongest laundering, and goes well with all other kinds of hand and face towels, and never goes out of style.

Care. Bath towels are exposed to skin oil, soil and germs, so wash them in hot (120° F.) water with laundry detergent -- and occasionally with chlorine bleach if the towels are white. Avoid fabric softeners -- they contain silicones that will make towels almost water repellent.

Price. A top-quality Turkish towel may cost \$30 compared with \$7 for an average-quality towel. But a top-

quality towel can last for 10 years, making the cost difference smaller. So be patient and wait for a good sale to buy them at a bargain.



ASK A NURSE

Q: Is there a web site that will tell me how to begin running. I am overweight but would like to begin running. My bone density is 35.2. I do walk but running seems like fun.

A: You could try going to www.runnersworld.com. It has a beginners section and even has an 8 week beginners training program you could try.

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Q: Is teeth whitening safe?

A: Many teeth whitening systems are available, including whitening toothpastes, over-the counter gels, strips and trays, and whitening agents obtained from a dentist. Teeth whitening is ideal for people who have healthy, unrestored teeth (no fillings) and gums. Individuals with yellow tones to their teeth respond best. But this cosmetic procedure is not recommended for everyone. To find out if teeth whitening is right for you contact your dentist.

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Q: Recently I was diagnosed with Psoriasis. Can you please tell me more about Psoriasis?

A: Psoriasis is a chronic inflammatory disorder. What we know is that the immune system attacks the skin from the inside out. The effects of the inflammatory cells on the skin cause the skin to get red,

thick, and scaly. As a result, patients develop these unsightly plaques that are visible on the skin's surface.

July is UV Safety Month

It's summertime; the sun is bright and there is a great danger the sun can harm the eyes. Everyone is at risk for eye damage that can lead to vision loss from exposure to the ultraviolet rays of the sun. Protect your eyes.

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Recipe Corner



Tangy Watermelon Salad

4 cups cubed seedless watermelon
2 tbsp. olive oil
3 tbsp. lime juice
1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
¾ cup crumbled feta cheese
¼ cup coarsely chopped fresh mint or Italian parsley

1. Place watermelon cubes in large bowl.
2. Whisk olive oil, lime juice and vinegar in a small bowl and pour over watermelon. Toss to coat. Add salt and pepper to taste.
3. Gently stir in feta and mint or parsley. Serve salad immediately in a watermelon wedge shell if desired.



This newsletter is brought to you courtesy of Med-Cert, Inc. Our sources for this edition are Web MD, and Prevention magazine.