Protect the Skin You're In: Skin Cancer Awareness Month

Week of:
May 06, 2016

What does a melanoma look like?

Alice?

What does a melanoma look like?

Signed,
Sunny

Plant-based sun protection

Dear Alice,

Recently I bought a sun protection cream from a health food store. The cream claims to provide sun protection (it's labeled SPF 15) by a plant complex made of PABA, willow bark extract, myrtle and myrtus leaf extract. It says that myrtle and myrtus leaf help protect from both UVA and UVB.

My questions are as follows:

1) Can this PABA complex provide the sun protection it claims (SPF 15 for both UVA and UVB rays)? The reason I am asking this is because until now I had only heard of sun protection by titanium dioxide or chemicals like octyl mexaoxycinnamate (did I get it right?). So I am curious to find out.

2) I notice a slight burning sensation in my eyes after I apply the product on my face. Is it true that PABA is a common irritant? (Since I notice many products proudly claiming PABA-free I wonder if it's really not good for you.)

Please help. I hope this question falls within your realm of expertise. After all, you are the 'know it all' around here, aren't you?
Thank you,

'Burning' to find out

Read more [3]

**Dark skin ? Is sunscreen necessary?** [4]

Dear Alice,

I am African-American, but my skin is not that dark. I was never told that I needed sunscreen and when I worked in a daycare I was told in a very delicate manner that only the paler children needed sunscreen. I've been out in the sun for extended periods of time and was wondering if sunscreen is necessary for someone of my complexion. If so, what strength?

Read more [4]

**Shining light on sun protection products** [5]

Dear Alice,

I find choosing among all of the available sunscreens and sunblocks to be very confusing. Of the following three products I am currently using, which one is giving my skin the most protection: sunscreen SPF 30 with UVA, UVB, and IR sun protection; sunblock SPF 17 with UVA, UVB, and IR sun protection; or, sunblock SPF 50 with UVA and UVB sun protection? By the way, what is the difference between a sunSCREEN and a sunBLOCK?

Desperately Seeking Protection

Read more [5]

**Freckles, freckles, go away** [6]

Dear Alice,

When I was young, I had no freckles. As I got older, my face began to form freckles. Also, darker freckles are forming. Is there a way I can remove the freckles or stop them from forming?

Sincerely,
Bobbie

Read more [6]
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