

Reader Urges Open Mind to Sunscreen Ingredient Concerns

Read Dr. Bhatia's editorial/story in *Practical Dermatology*® about bringing sunscreen samples to his neighbors' house and the following interaction with other guests there. (Read it online at PracticalDermatology.com/2017/07)

I hope that Dr. Bhatia will be open to ongoing developments in sunscreen research and endocrine disruptors in general.

Recent research is pointing to some sunscreen ingredients mimicking progesterone and affecting men's sperm count.

If it is affecting men to this significant of a degree, it is also concerning regarding the effect it might be having on women.

As the editorial mentioned, some sunscreen ingredients also are having significant environmental impact.

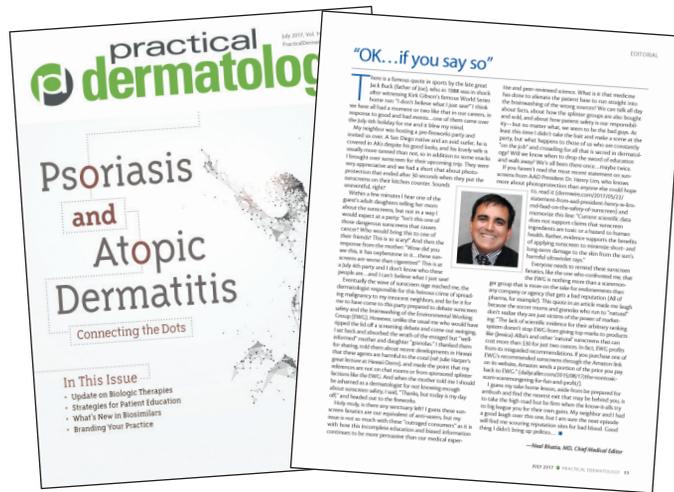
I also hope that our specialty will be open to patients, fellow citizens, and organizations such as the Environmental Working Group investigating well beyond what is currently available in the medical literature.

I also hope that we can do so without verbally denigrating them.

With regard to the comment about Amazon sending a portion of the price to the Environmental Working Group, how is that any different than the FDA getting "usage fees" for drugs that they approve?

Just because something is stated in the medical literature doesn't always mean that it is true in the long run...as the history of medicine can easily point out.

I routinely encourage my patients to research ingre-



dients in all topical products that they use and make their "best educated decision" about what to use. I give them a handout discussing some of the concerns that have been brought up about various ingredients. I often direct patients toward zinc oxide based sunscreens because I have not heard anything negative regarding them so far. I also encourage patients to try organic olive oil or coconut oil as

single ingredient, chemical- and preservative-free moisturizers. I also encourage them to get these in a glass canning jar in bulk at the local co-op grocery in hopes of avoiding the plastics/chemicals that most of our topical products come to us in.

I guess I would be considered a "granola" according to the editorial.

In the process of life and learning, I hope that all of us will work together to make our bodies, homes, and planet healthier to live in and on.

Thanks for listening!

—Abigail Haberman, MD
Corvallis, OR

Dr. Bhatia's Comments

My purpose in that editorial was not really to focus on the developments in sunscreen technology, more it was to point out another case of how consumers and patients should trust their sources when it comes to information that is online and in the media...and even

worse, how the lack of trust in doctors compared to what is read online continues to grow.

All dermatologists should stay abreast of the new developments and issues regarding sunscreens (e.g., the oxybenzone issue with coral reefs, and the point about the hormonal influences mimicking progesterone), and try to be open to the future applications of ingredients in photoprotection strategies. I also would salute taking a more natural approach.

Fortunately many of the new methods for UV protection include antioxidant technology such as Heliocare, the use of naturally occurring photolyases, and other compounds aside from zinc and titanium oxides as pure sunblock agents.

The science is always evolving without question. Of course, my editorials are as much about relating to colleagues as they are for information...and maybe a little entertainment as well.

Sunscreen Analysis Questioned

A reader brought to our attention that the Personal Care Products Council (www.CosmeticsInfo.org) issued a statement in response to *Consumer Reports'* recent analysis of sunscreens. We covered that analysis in our June edition (available online at PracticalDermatology.com/2017/06) and on DermWire.com. The PCPC statement reads in part:

"*Consumer Reports* recently released a new review, where they score sunscreen products based on their own internal testing criteria. It appears that their testing methods are not consistent with those used by the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA). Therefore, their testing methods are not the same as those required of product manufacturers to assign the SPF designation. We recognize their shared goal to educate consumers on the importance of sun safety as well as easy steps to properly apply sunscreens. We do, however, caution consumers that the results of the *Consumer Reports* testing cannot be directly compared to a label claim..."

We encourage consumers to consider the following tips for sun safety:

- Avoid the sun during the peak hours of 10:00am-4:00pm
- Wear sun protective clothing, including a wide-brimmed hat and UV protective sunglasses
- Use a broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher every day, even on a cloudy day
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours or immediately after swimming or sweating
- Visit your healthcare professional every year for a skin exam

Our goal is to help consumers make informed decisions and use sunscreen as an important part of an overall safe sun program. Daily use of sunscreen is a crucial step in the fight against skin cancer and premature skin aging. It is our hope that using sunscreen becomes as much of a habit as putting on your seatbelt." ■



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- BATH
- EYE MAKEUP
- FACIAL MAKEUP
- FRAGRANCE
- HAIR CARE
- HAIR DYE AND HAIR COLORING
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Sunscreens: How to Read a Label, Expert Tips etc. SHARE THIS

Sunscreens and Sunless Tanners

How do sunscreens work?

Sunscreens are typically applied products that protect the skin from the sun's damaging ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Sunscreens work by including active ingredients that remain on the surface of the skin that absorb, scatter, or reflect the UV radiation before it reaches the skin. By filtering out harmful UV rays, sunscreens help to reduce the risk of skin cancer and premature skin aging, as well as help prevent sunburn.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), only products labeled with "Broad Spectrum" and SPF 15 or (higher) have been shown, if used as directed with other sun protection measures, to provide these benefits. By contrast, any sunscreen not labeled as "Broad Spectrum" or that has an SPF value between 2 and 14, has only been shown to help prevent sunburn.

While there are many different forms (lotion, spray, etc.) and types (water resistant, fragrance free, oil free, etc.) of sunscreen available, finding one that is best suited for individual needs and proper use are key factors to protecting skin.