



Calling The Shots on SPF

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Highlighting the latest international research, Oasis Beauty founder Stephanie Evans, says: 'We've known for some time that our sunscreen has some pretty special properties, but now the latest research is in and a new study in the journal Dermatologic Surgery shows that sunscreen can not only protect your skin but also reverse common signs of photo-aging, like wrinkles and hyper pigmentation.'

'In spite of living in a country with a lot of UV radiation, most New Zealanders don't apply enough sunscreen. We tell all our customers to use the equivalent of a shot glass of sunscreen to the face and body, that's about two milligrams of sunscreen per square centimetre of skin; a fifty cent-sized splodge just for the face. But the news that properly applied, sunscreen can help reverse the signs of aging is hugely encouraging.'

The small study, sponsored by the Johnson & Johnson's Skin Research Center and led by dermatologists Steven Wang and James Leyden, showed improvements in the many signs of aging caused by the sun, such as texture, overall tone, and fine lines. With just a daily application of moisturizer with SPF 30, participants saw improvements of 52 percent in mottled pigmentation (a.k.a. sun spots), 40 percent in skin texture, and 41 percent in skin clarity after a year of use.

Steph comments: 'What really interests me is that this appears to be connected with the skin's innate regenerative properties. The skin renews every 28 days and by preventing the continual accumulation of more and more damage with a good sunscreen it seems that the skin is healing on its own without having to use expensive anti-aging formulas. And although we recommend reapplying your sunscreen regularly throughout the day, the anti-aging effect was found from just one daily application every single day for a year.'

Every year over 2,000 patients are registered with life threatening melanoma and 67,000 cases of non-melanoma skin cancer are diagnosed in New Zealand alone. Steph's six smart tips for sunscreen are

1.

Checking Sunscreen for Zinc Oxide

Zinc oxide is recommended by the American Association of Dermatology as a clean, broad-spectrum effective and hypoallergenic blocker of UV radiation. Studies have also indicated that it may be one of the few active ingredients in sunscreen that doesn't cause premature aging from the release of free-radicals in the skin.

2.

A Tan is Not a Good Look

Getting a tanned skin is just as dangerous as getting sunburnt. Well-established studies on the effects of the rays that don't cause sunburn (UVA) indicate that those who consistently tan may be just as much at risk of skin cancer and premature aging as those who experience sunburn.

3.

UVA and UVB Cause Damage

UVA radiation makes up to 95% of the rays that reach our skin from the sun. While UVA rays are less harmful than UVB, UVA may cause more damage than we think. Doctor John H Epstein of the Skin Cancer Foundation reveals 'Studies over the past two decades, show that UVA damages skin cells called keratinocytes in the basal layer of the epidermis, where most skin cancers occur. UVA contributes to and may even initiate the development of skin cancers.'

4.

The SPF Number is Exposure Time not Protection Rating

Dermatologists agree that SPF 30 is a minimum requirement of sun protection, but advice from the Skin Cancer Foundation makes clear: 'SPF is not an amount of protection per se. Rather; it indicates how long it will take for UVB rays to redden skin when using a sunscreen, compared to how long skin would take to redden without the product. For instance, someone using a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 will take 30 times longer to redden than without the sunscreen; SPF 30 protects against 97 percent; and SPF 50, 98 percent.'

5.

Priming the Skin and Then Reapply

Dermatologist's best advice is to apply a thick base layer of sunscreen 15-30 minutes before going out and a second layer 15-30 minutes after initial exposure and then every two hours after that or as needed. One study by the American Academy of Dermatology reveals: 'Typically reapplication of sunscreen at 20 minutes [after initial exposure] results in 60% to 85% of the ultraviolet exposure that would be received if sunscreen were reapplied at 2 hours.'

6.

Sunscreen Every Day Rain or Shine

Not using sunscreen on cloudy days may be increasing the risk, reveals one study. We tend to stay outside longer without sunscreen when it is overcast and researchers now believe the clouds may magnify UV radiation putting us at more risk than we think. According to a report by NASA's Socioeconomic Data and Applications Centre '...short-term or localised UV levels can be larger than for cloud-free skies if direct sunlight is also present. Clouds tend to randomise the directions of the incoming radiation.'

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For further information, images or interviews with Oasis Beauty Founder Stephanie Evans, please contact:

0800 OASIS NZ (0800 627476) or email steph@oasisbeauty.com

Contacts

Stephanie Evans

0800 627 476

[mailto: steph@oasisbeauty.com](mailto:steph@oasisbeauty.com)

Peter Boyes

0275 540 500

[mailto: peter@boyespr.co.nz](mailto:peter@boyespr.co.nz)