

Health Beat

SKIN CARE



Wait, Before You Pop That Pimple!

Maya Hill

Inside this issue:

<i>Wait, Before You Pop That Pimple!</i>	1,2
<i>Skin Allergies Abound</i>	1,4
<i>Skin Cancer</i>	2
<i>The Unfriendly Sun</i>	3
<i>Skin Diseases</i>	3

After washing your face you peer into the mirror; surprised by the string of pimples that stare back at you. Before you panic about your situation let's learn some healthy facts about proper skin care.

Acne is the term for plugged pores (blackheads and whiteheads), pimples, and even deeper lumps that occur on the face, neck, chest, back, shoulders, and even the upper arm.¹ Contrary to the popular belief that acne is a hygiene disease, in actuality it is caused by hormones. Acne is caused by a hormone imbalance, which causes stimulation of sebaceous glands. The sebaceous gland is connected to a canal, the follicle, which contains a fine hair and make an oily substance called sebum that normally empties onto the skin's surface

through the opening of the follicle.¹

Many teenagers and young adults have acne. The good news is that acne tends to disappear by the time most people hit 30 years old. Maybe you should blame your parents for your acne breakouts because it is very common to inherit acne. Before you haul off and blame your parents, let's learn some frequent myths and mistakes that many young people fall into when it comes to skin care.

Q: "If I wash my face at least 4 times a day, will my acne clear up?"

A: No. Constant friction on the skin can aggravate it, resulting in a more severe breakout.¹

Q: "If I stop eating hamburgers or chocolate, will my acne go away or lessen?"



Contrary to popular belief, washing your face too often can actually promote breakouts.

A: No. Your diet has nothing to do with your acne. Food does not cause breakouts.²

Q: "Is my high stress level the cause of my blemishes?"

A: No. Stress levels do not impact acne. However, severe stress can sometimes cause acne.²

Now that we've dealt with the common myths of acne let's explore the major

(Continued on Page 2)

The Health Resource Center offers:

- Sexual Health Awareness Workshops on Tuesdays from 10:00-12:00 p.m. and Wednesdays from 3:00-5:00 p.m.
- Free HIV/STD Testing
- Men's Health Clinic
- Nutrition Counseling

Skin Allergies Abound

Skin allergies occur when the skin comes into direct contact with an allergen or the immune system responds to a food that the body believes is harmful.¹ An allergy is an immediate hypersensitive reaction to a foreign protein that triggers the body to fight the invader.²

Skin contact with cosmetics is a leading cause of allergic reactions on the

skin, also known as contact dermatitis. It may cause redness, swelling, burning, stinging, itching, and blisters. The chemicals in makeup and lotions can react negatively with the body's chemistry and cause reactions that typically appear where the skin care product was applied.³

Other causes of skin irritation are hair care products, including hair dye and permanent solutions, jewelry

containing nickel, household cleaning products, and bath powders.³

Hives are a type of response to an allergen. They are generally characterized as raised areas on the skin that are red and itchy. Acute hives arise quickly and can last for up to six weeks.⁴

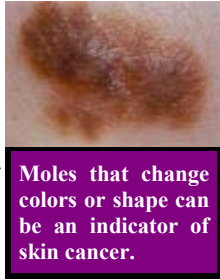
One of the most common skin allergens is natural rubber latex. Latex products are manufactured

(Continued on Page 4)

Kristen Force

Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is the most prevalent of all cancers. Each year, 47,000 Americans are diagnosed with melanoma.¹ There are three main types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma. Basal cell carcinoma is the less serious type and the most common, accounting for 90% of all skin cancers.¹ Melanoma affects the pigment-producing cells and is the deadliest form of skin cancer, accountable for 75% of all skin cancer deaths.¹



Moles that change colors or shape can be an indicator of skin cancer.

Certain lifestyles or characteristics make a person more prone to developing skin cancer. People who have a higher risk of developing skin cancer are people who always burn, never tan, are fair with red or blond hair, and have green or blue eyes and freckles.²

The risk of developing melanoma is 20 times higher for Caucasians than dark-skinned people.³ The Abramson Cancer Center of the University of Pennsylvania reported: “The melanin in dark-skinned people has been found to have a natural sun protection factor (SPF) and can filter twice as much ultraviolet light as that of a light skinned person. This protection, however, is not complete and melanoma can develop in

dark skinned people.” Melanoma tends to be found on soles, palms, or nail beds in dark-skinned people.³

According to The American Academy of Dermatology, there are a few ingredients that you should look for when choosing a sunscreen. One of the main ingredients found in sunscreen are stain-resistant ingredients called PABA esters that include glycerol PABA, padimate-A (pentyl dimethyl PABA) and padimate-O (octyl dimethyl PABA).⁴ Another important aspect to consider is the SPF. It is a numerical representation for the length of time the sunblock guards against the sun’s rays. For example, if you buy a sunblock with SPF 15, this means that it would take 15 times longer for you to burn.⁴

Detection of skin cancer at an early stage is extremely important. The Skin Cancer Foundation (SCF) has developed the ABCDs for detecting cancerous skin:

- **A – Asymmetry** (common moles are round and symmetrical)
- **B – Border** (skin cancers may have uneven borders)
- **C – Color** (watch for varied shades of brown, tan or black and also red, white, and blue)
- **D – Diameter** if a spot is larger than a pencil eraser, it could be trouble.

Skin cancers vary widely in shape. According to the SCF: “Anything that changes, grows or fits any of the ABCDs should be taken seriously.”

For skin cancer prevention, avoiding sun exposure is key.³ The SCF recommends applying sunscreen in advance to sun exposure and reapplying frequently after that. The SCF suggests not relying on sunscreen alone and also using broad-spectrum products with high SPF. The most damaging hours of sun exposure are between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.³ Dressing for sun protection can play an important role in reducing the risk of developing skin cancer as well. Wearing long sleeved shirts and darker colors offer even more protection.³



Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers

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Before You Pop...

factors that causes acne to flare up.

- Changing hormone levels.¹
- Squeezing or picking blemishes causes infection and may cause more pimples to appear.
- Environmental irritants such as high humidity and certain pollution.

Acne can be treated by prescription medication, administered by a dermatologist. One of the most popular prescribed acne medications is Accutane. It is used to treat severe acne and is highly effective. However, it can cause serious side effects



Neither stress nor chocolate will increase acne.

such as depression, mental problems, and birth defects.³

Benzoyl peroxide is a common ingredient that is used in over-the-counter acne medications. The anti-acne effects of benzoyl peroxide are anti-bacterial with an accompanying decrease of sebum.² Salicylic acid is another key ingredient in over-the-counter products. This ingredient helps to correct the abnormal shedding of cells.² It also helps clean out clogged pores to prevent lesions and blemishes. Salicylic acid doesn’t have any effect on the

production of sebum, but is highly effective with continuous use. If you stop using the medication, the pores will clog up again. You can find these ingredients in products at any local drug-store.

So before you run off to scrub the top layer of your skin, don’t forget the tips you learned about proper skin care.

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(Cont. from Page 1)

The Unfriendly Sun

Michelle Biba

One of the most deadly exposures that can impact the way we live is sun exposure. This means that sun exposure from ultraviolet A (UVA) which causes about 20% of sunburns and can potentially damage cellular DNA¹ and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays can alter our collagen and pigmentation found in our skin. They break down the collagen and there the elasticity is loosened causing us to form wrinkles, stretch marks, moles and burns on our skin.

Why not consider self-tanners to achieve that golden bronze skin that you ache for? There are a variety of self-tanners available on the market. Each self-tanner has its own flaws and it also depends on the color pigmentation of your skin to determine which self-tanner will work for you. Disadvantages of tanners are an uneven tan, streaks, or an unfavorable discoloration of the skin. The advantages of self-tanners include the non-risk of burns, your exposure to the sun, easy removal, and non-permanence. Those who seek a more professional looking tan can tan at the local tanning salons. However, there



Prolonged sun exposure can lead to wrinkles, burns, and even DNA damage.

are a few more disadvantages to the tanning salons than expected. For instance, most sun lamps emit mainly UVA rays, and these



"tanning rays" are less likely to cause a sunburn than UVB rays from sunlight. But, contrary to the claims of some tanning parlors, that doesn't make them safe.³ Researchers have now learned that tanning beds do produce UVB rays.⁴

Here are some tips from The American Academy of Dermatology for Sun Protection:^{3,5}

1. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen of at least SPF 15, and apply it even on cloudy days.
2. If exposed to water, use a water-resistant sunscreen.
3. Reapply sunscreen about every 1 ½ hours.
4. Wear a broad-brimmed hat and sunglasses.
5. Seek shade whenever possible.
6. Wear protective, tightly-woven clothing.

7. Plan outdoor activities ahead to avoid the peak sunlight hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information on the levels of ultraviolet radiation reaching your area at noon, you can get the Ultraviolet Index (UVI) from local newspapers, radio or TV in many cities. The UVI is a number from 0 to 10. The higher the number, the more intense the exposure. Call the EPA Hotline for more information on the UVI at (800) 296-1996.

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Skin Diseases

Melissa Lew

The skin is the largest organ in the body and accounts for 16% of the total body weight. One in six (15%) of all visits to the doctor involves a skin problem.¹

Athlete's Foot

Athlete's foot is a form of fungus infection of the feet.² Sweaty feet, tight shoes or socks, and a warm climate contribute to the development of athlete's foot.² Some measures to prevent athlete's foot are washing your feet daily, drying them thoroughly after washing, avoiding tight footwear, changing and wearing cotton socks, and dusting with an anti-fungal powder in your shoes in the summertime.

Cold Sores

Another skin disease that afflicts many people is cold sores. They are caused by Herpes Simplex-1 and are contagious.³ Some common symptoms of

cold sores are blisters, redness, and pain. Their usual duration is seven to 10 days.³ Cold sores are not curable and there are no known preventive measures to avert the onset of an incident.³ Steps taken to guard against cold sores are avoiding kissing and skin contact with infected persons, washing hands frequently, and avoiding situations such as cold, and sun exposure by using sun-block.³

Atopic Dermatitis

Atopic dermatitis, also known as atopic eczema, describes all kinds of problems that make your skin red, blistering, oozing, and scaly.² Atopic means an illness (usually an allergy) that can run in the family.²



Cold sores in the mouth are caused by Herpes Simplex-1.

Atopic eczema is most common in infants and young adults, and usually gets better before the person is 25 years old.² This skin rash is very itchy. The spots usually break out where the elbow bends, on the backs of the knees, ankles, wrists, and on the face, neck and upper chest. It is a good idea to see the dermatologist immediately if you suspect atopic eczema. The dermatologist may prescribe medications, such as creams, ointment or pills to control the itching.³

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Skin Allergies

(Cont. from Page 1)

natural rubber latex. Latex products are manufactured from a milky fluid derived from the rubber tree.⁴ Proteins in latex and chemicals added during production can cause a range of mild to severe allergic reactions, including skin rashes, hives, itching, and sinus irritation.⁵

The Food and Drug Administration attributes the increased hypersensitivity to natural rubber latex to a ten-fold increase in the use of latex gloves.⁵ In most cases, a latex allergy develops after repeated exposures to latex.²

In food allergies, the immune system mistakenly detects a harmful substance and mounts a defense against the chemicals in the food by producing specific antibodies. When an individual eats that food again, the body remembers the first encounter

antibody to fight the invading allergen.

Allergies to food can result in swelling of the tongue and throat, difficulty breathing, hives, a drop in blood pressure, and even death. Symptoms usually appear within minutes to two hours after an allergy-inducing food has been ingested.

The most common foods to cause allergic reactions in adults are shellfish, such as shrimp and lobster, peanuts, walnuts, and fish. Children tend to react to different allergens, including eggs, milk, soy, and peanuts. Adults do not usually stop having an allergic reaction to a specific food, but children can outgrow an allergy.⁶

The best treatment for skin allergies is strict avoidance of the allergen. Ingredient labels should be read closely by individuals with known allergies. If a product does not have a

label or the terms are unfamiliar, the manufacturer should be contacted.

Although there is no cure for skin allergies, precautions can be taken to reduce the risk of a reaction. The first line of defense is to try to avoid the allergen if possible. It can also help to use hypoallergenic and fragrance-free products. If contact dermatitis or hives do occur, these symptoms can often be treated with over-the-counter antihistamines or a prescription.³

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