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Here comes the **SUN**

The sunny season is upon us. Here's to enjoying every last second while protecting that pretty skin of yours at the same time, writes **Kelly Baker**.

EACH AND EVERY year, I yearn for summer to arrive and when the first officially hot days bob on the horizon, I feel my heart quicken with excitement. It may not be a scientific fact (or heck, maybe it is), but in my mind, it's irrefutable – everything is better when the sun is blazing in the sky. Everything, that is, except my skin, which unfortunately is showing signs of serious sun damage. Like most Australian women over 30, I am sporting the odd sunspot and some uneven pigmentation. Like some, I also have a pinkish thumbnail-sized scar on my left shoulder where a basal cell carcinoma used to nestle. Clearly, my love of the sun is starting to make itself evident and it's time to get serious as far as sun protection is concerned.

So, this year, I am going to do things differently. Not only will I follow all of the traditional summer skincare rules (you know what I'm talking about, the wearing of the hat, the staying in the shade during the hottest hours of the day), but I plan to add a few new ones as well. And I'm hoping you will, too. After all, thanks to today's incredible technology, there are reams of clever products and practices that will allow you to get your daily dose of sunshine, yet keep your skin as sweetly soft and lovely as it ought to be.

WHAT TO WEAR

It's easier to protect your skin from sun damage if you understand exactly how that damage occurs. So here goes. There are three kinds of ultraviolet rays – A, B and C. Ultraviolet C is blocked out by the ozone layer, so we see very little of that type at ground level. It's long been thought that Ultraviolet B is behind the burning rays that cause skin cancer, while Ultraviolet A causes lines and wrinkles. However, recent research seems to show that both types of UV rays contribute to both problems.

"The difference is not as clear-cut as what we once thought," says Dr Darrell Rigel, clinical professor of dermatology at New York University.

Given that, it's all the more important that we choose sunscreens which are broad-spectrum, which means they protect against both UVA and UVB rays. ►



SPF only measures UVB protection, so you can have an SPF of 30 or 50 that has excellent UVB protection, but variable UVA protection, says Dr Rigel.

“It is critical when you get a sunscreen that it has good UVB and UVA protection. Broad-spectrum sunscreen means you have coverage in both wavelengths,” he says.

WHEN TO WEAR IT

If you want your skin to be protected from the sun’s harsh rays (and who doesn’t), your best bet is to apply sunscreen before you leave the house. You need to reapply throughout the day, however, particularly if you plan on being outdoors. Most sunscreens work quite well initially, but the fact is they do break down over time, meaning that, generally speaking, in four to six hours they’ve disappeared. If you plan to swim, you’ll need to ensure you wear a product that’s water resistant and reapply more frequently. The same goes for activities that will see you work up a sweat. And make sure you apply the correct amount. To cover the average body, you need a golf ball-sized amount of sunscreen.

“That may seem a lot and it may feel a little thick,” says Dr Rigel.

This is another reason why a higher level of SPF is so advantageous. “If you under-apply, you are still getting a reasonable protection,” he says.

AND IF YOU DON'T

Skip the sunscreen and you’re looking at skin cancer, simple as that. And if you think it won’t happen to you, then how about these sobering facts: each year, more than 10,000 Australians are treated for melanoma. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, more than 1200 of them die. Further, two in three Australians will be diagnosed with a form of skin cancer before they hit the age of 70. One of the simplest ways to dial down that risk is to wear a quality broad-spectrum, high-level SPF sunscreen.

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OVER TIME.”

Cancer Council Australia would also like to see us covering up, donning a hat and staying out of the sun during the hottest hours of the day (between 10am and 2pm in non-daylight saving periods, 11am to 3pm during daylight saving). Do all that and your chances of staying cancer-free are excellent. And for the vain among us, there’s also the fact those lovely looks of yours will stay youthful for longer.

“Overexposure to the sun causes a range of skin issues,” says Dr Joseph Hkeik, of All Saints Cosmedical Clinic. “Age spots and skin that’s grey in colour ... reddish skin and broken capillaries. Skin that sags, fine lines and, eventually, deep wrinkles. Scaly, rough patches and, of course, skin cancer.”

We love ...

- 1 Cancer Council Sport Sunscreen 30+, \$9.95.
- 2 Ego Sun Sense Daily Face Invisible Tint Finish SPF 30+, \$24.95.
- 3 La Roche-Posay Anthelios XL Extreme Fluid 30+, \$25.95.
- 4 Nivea Sun Ultra Beach Protect Sunscreen Spray SPF30+, \$17.25.
- 5 St Tropez Gradual Tan Mousse, \$43.95.
- 6 Neutrogena Wet Skin Sunscreen Spray SPF 30+, \$14.99.
- 7 Hamilton Everyday Face Invisible Shield SPF 30+, \$12.95.
- 8 Vaseline Aloe Fresh Lotion SPF 15, \$7.68.
- 9 Ella Baché Great Tanning Mitt, \$15.
- 10 L’Oréal Paris UV Perfect SPF 30+ Oily/Combination, \$17.95.
- 11 Ella Baché Great 30+ Facesaver, \$39.
- 12 Banana Boat Ultra Clear Spray 30+, \$16.49.



While the clock can’t be turned back, modern-day treatments, such as the laser Fraxel, muscle relaxant Botox and fillers including Restylane and Juvederm, can do wonders for sun-damaged skin. Get clever with the sun protection and you may be able to skip all that, says Dr Peter Bakaric of the Collagen Face Centre.

“And the best sun-damage preventative? Stay out of the sun,” says Dr Bakaric. ■