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Skin, Sun and Sun Block

Dr. Ghohestani's interview with San Antonio Express News (Updated by TID)

No SPF? UVA and UVB will leave you RED
Dr. R. Fredrick Ghohestani, of the Division of Dermatology and Cutaneous Surgery at UTHSC, recommends that people wear at least SPF 30 every time they step outdoors.



If there is one thing the chief of the Division of Dermatology and Cutaneous Surgery at the University of Texas Health Science Center wants people to know about the sun, he emphasizes that sun protection needs to start at an early age.

THE ABCs OF SKIN CANCER

A is for ASYMMETRY: One half of a mole or birthmark does not match the other.

B is for BORDER: The edges are irregular, ragged, notched or blurred.

C is for COLOR: The color is not the same all over and may include shades of brown or black, sometimes with patches of red, white or blue.

D is for DIAMETER: The spot is larger than 6 millimeters across (about the size of a pencil eraser) or is growing larger.

E is for EVOLVING: The mole or birthmark is changing in any way.

Dr. Ghohestani said recent studies show that people who were sunburned as children are three to five times more likely to get skin cancer as an adult.

It's very, very important to emphasize sun protection for kids, Dr. Ghohestani said. Most people think that's not a big deal and then they end up having cancer 20-50 years later.

According to the National Cancer Institute, skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the U.S. Every year, more than 1 million Americans are diagnosed with skin cancer.

Ultraviolet rays cause cancer by damaging the cell's center, which controls the proliferation of cells. These rays are subdivided into three categories according to their wavelength: UVA, UVB and UVC. Research and studies show that UVB rays directly cause these mutations in the DNA. Ghohestani said that to avoid these harmful changes, it is important for people to protect their skin from the sun.

Ghohestani said he encourages people to use sunscreens that block both UVA and UVB rays every day.

We know recently that UVA is damaging to skin and chronic exposure is harmful to the skin as well, he said. We see sun-damaged skin on the left side of drivers from the windows in their car windows only block out UVB rays, not UVA rays. He said people who do not put on sunscreen every day, especially those who spend a lot of time driving, tend to have more wrinkles on the left side of their face because of sun damage.

Ghohestani recommends that people wear at least SPF 30 every time they leave their home, even on cloudy days and road trips. An adult should apply about two tablespoons of sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going out. Sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours.

He explained that without sun protection, a fair-skinned person turns red after about 10 minutes in the sun. If that same individual uses sunscreen with an SPF of 30, it will take approximately 150 minutes for his or her skin to turn red. In general, he said it is not necessary to apply sunscreen with an SPF higher than 50. However, people should consider waterproof sun protection when they are swimming because UV rays can still be harmful through one or two feet of water.

He recommends that people buy hypoallergenic sunscreen that offers protection from the sun's harmful rays. Stores typically sell a mixture of sunblock that physically blocks UV rays and sunscreen that contains chemicals, which absorb the rays.

He suggests people also protect themselves by wearing protective clothing, finding shade, and avoiding direct sun exposure from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. during summer months. Hats and clothing with high UPF factors help decrease UV exposure. All fabrics have different UPF factors: closely woven fabric, dark colors, and dry cloth have high UPFs.

Ghohestani urges taking precautions against sun exposure.

We really discourage people to go out and expose their skin to any ultraviolet radiation either through sun or tanning salons, he said there is a correlation between tanning and wrinkles.

Instead of tanning, he recommends sunless tanning products commonly sold as creams gels, lotions and sprays. However, in the event that sunburn has already occurred due to tanning or sun exposure, he suggests waiting until it goes away or applying hydrocortisone if it is not blistered. If a burn blisters, does not disappear after a few days, or an allergic reaction occurs, seek medical attention.

Samantha Hensley | 210SA contributor

*Dr. Ghohestani is currently Director of Texas Institute of Dermatology in San Antonio, TX.



R. Fredrick Ghohestani, M.D., Ph.D

Dr. Ghohestani specializes in Dermatology, Cosmetics, and Dermatology Surgery.

Dr. Ghohestani completed his internship in surgery at Pennsylvania Hospital, the University of Pennsylvania, one of the oldest universities in America and, a member of the Ivy League institutes. He subsequently fulfilled a Dermatology Residency at Thomas Jefferson University, one of the top dermatology programs in the country. Dr. Ghohestani has a Master's Degree in Science in Skin Biology, Cosmetology, and Skin Pharmacology, and a Ph.D. (Skin Immunology) from Claude Bernard University in Lyon, France.

Dr. Ghohestani's outstanding work and dedication to excellence has earned him numerous honors and peer recognitions, including the American Skin Association Career Award, Dermatology Foundation Career Award, the Charles Grupper Prize by the French Society of Dermatology, and the Commitment to Professionalism by the Pennsylvania Medical Society. For more than a decade, he has been skilled in the art and science of Dermatology, Cutaneous Biology, and Surgery. He continually searches for and implements the best treatment options for his patients. His research group has recently discovered a novel skin disease that is characterized with antibodies to type IV collagen.

Dr. Ghohestani is a former Chief and Associate Professor of Dermatology and Cutaneous Surgery at the University of Texas Health Science Center. He speaks frequently to a variety of public and professional organizations. He has shared the results of his research and expertise in more than a hundred published papers and medical journal abstracts. Dr. Ghohestani served as the editor of the European Journal of Dermatology from 2001-2008.