



Fun in the sun

Screen yourself from the sun, but beware of sunscreen myths



DOCTORS HAVE TIME and again harped on the importance of using a sunscreen to protect one's skin. For many, however, choosing the right sunscreen is a tough choice, what with scores of products with various SPFs (Sun Protection Factors) flooding store shelves.

Does higher SPF mean better protection? Not so much, say doctors, who warn against being misled by marketing gimmicks.

"SPF is a log measurement of protection against the sun's rays. Although you may be led to believe that a higher SPF sunscreen will give you better protection, the difference in effectiveness between a lower and higher SPF lotion is not much. For example, the difference in the efficacy between an SPF 15 and 30 sunscreen is just 1.2 percent," Nitin S. Walia, consultant, dermatology at Max Super Speciality Hospital, said.

What actually does make a difference is the amount of sunscreen lotion or cream that you dab on, he added.

Surabhi Patel, dermatologist, agrees: "One should apply generous amounts of sunscreen on all exposed parts of the body, at least 15 minutes before stepping out in the sun, for its effectiveness to kick in."

"Re-application of

sunscreen lotion or cream every two hours is important," Patel said.

The same rules apply when you are going for a dip in the pool - apply generous amounts of sunscreen and re-apply every two hours.

"Consumers should be aware that no sunscreen is waterproof, because ultimately all such creams get washed off. They can be water resistant, but those that are labelled so should also state whether they remain effective for 40 minutes or 80 minutes when swimming or if you perspire. Also there should be directions on when to re-

apply," Patel said.

Talking about the benefits of sunscreen products, dermatologist Bindu Sthalekar said, "Many people think that sunscreen is only to guard against tanning. However, over-exposure to sun and sun damage can lead to premature ageing, dullness, pigmentation, and fine lines. Applying an SPF 15 sunscreen means you can stay out in the sun for roughly two hours without any skin damage".

While doctors advise sunscreen in all seasons, the efficacy of physical protection is given great importance by all.

"Large amounts of

sunscreen would ideally be needed to protect oneself the whole day, and carrying around so much sunscreen may not be feasible," Walia said. "This is why physical protection, like a scarf, long sleeved clothes, an umbrella, a pair of shades, is important because they screen you from the sun's direct rays".

Protection of your hair with a head gear or hat is also important.

And doctors advise limited time outdoors between 10am and 2pm when the sun's rays are the strongest.

So guard yourself and bask in the sun, literally. IANS

ALIGN YOUR LIFE

The Silent Killer

SHADI WAS HAVING troubling remembering details. He could never find his car keys, forgot where he had parked his car and was not able to sleep well night after night. He tried everything - went for long walks, tried listening to relaxing music and event cut down on heavy food. But nothing helped. He kept getting worse until he reached a point where he had to take days off to try and rest. During our first session Shadi could barely talk to me, his phone kept ringing non-stop. First it was his boss, then his colleague, then someone else. The calls did not stop. Finally I had to encourage him to switch off his mobile. It was at that moment I realised what was creating havoc in his life; it was nothing else but stress.

Life is not easy these days. Everyone is overworked, driving during peak hours is a nightmare and most importantly we are not even aware that our fast paced lives are soaking in every drop of stress. Like Shadi, many of us experience signs of stress but don't pay any attention to it. That is one of the main reasons why stress is known as the silent killer. It creeps into our lives and before we know it, takes over our lives.

So how can you stop this silent killer from invading your life? The first step is to develop awareness. Observe your body and check your physical symptoms. Are you losing or gaining weight rapidly? Is your heart racing at all times? Do you have sweaty palms often? Do you have constant body ache? Are you not able to focus at work? If your answer is YES to some of the above, then you are suffering from stress. The second step is to get adequate sleep daily. Switch off the television and mobile, pick up a book and get into bed early so you have enough time to relax before you sleep.

Thirdly - practise deep breathing. Slowing down your breathing will help in getting more oxygen into your system and creating calming brain waves.

Fourth - balance your life. Finding work life balance will eliminate unwanted stress and allow you to enjoy your personal and professional life.

Fifth - Find a physical activity that you love doing and follow that up with basic exercise. A simple walk every evening may do the trick. Last but not the least - learn to say NO. Very often we want to please everyone around us and neglect ourselves. For a change put yourself before others and don't take on other people's stress.

A few simple steps can help you eliminate stress and lead a well balanced life. Start today and eliminate the silent killer forever.

Shivani Adalja is an Abu Dhabi-based well-being expert. She runs the Alignment Institute which offers effective solutions that focus on stress management and overall wellbeing. Email align@shivaniadalja.com



Believe in yourself

SCIENTISTS HAVE SHOWN that self-affirmation is the key to deal with stress and its impact, including the ability to solve problems, a study says.

Published in PLOS ONE, new research from Carnegie Mellon University provides the first evidence that self-affirmation can protect against the damaging effects of stress on problem-solving performance.

Understanding that self-affirmation - the process of identifying and focusing on one's most important values - boosts stressed individuals' problem-solving abilities will help guide future research

and the development of educational interventions.

"An emerging set of published studies suggest that a brief self-affirmation activity at the beginning of a school term can boost academic grade-point averages in underperforming kids at the end of the semester. This new work suggests a mechanism for these studies, showing self-affirmation effects on actual problem-solving performance under pressure," said J. David Creswell, assistant professor of psychology in CMU's Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences. IANS

