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Are You Aging Your Skin Prematurely?

Medical News You Can Use From Milwaukee Medical Clinic

As we grow older, our skin begins to wrinkle. Wrinkles are one of the more visual signs of aging. It's just a fact of life. Over time, as skin loses its fat and elasticity, wrinkles result. And while some people show wrinkles sooner than others, there are two important factors which will greatly affect your likelihood and frequency of wrinkles.

Unfortunately, the first factor is beyond your control. Wrinkles are hereditary. By looking at how your parents have aged and wrinkled, you'll have a good idea of what to expect.

The second, and far greater contributor to wrinkles, is the sun. While the sun causes the most damage to your skin, you can control your exposure. This is where skin protection and wrinkle prevention begins.

You Can Prevent Wrinkles

You'll be happy to know that you can prevent, or at least delay the appearance of wrinkles. Because the severity of your wrinkling is directly related to your exposure to the sun, the less sun you subject yourself to, the fewer wrinkles you will develop.

During exposure, the sun emits invisible Ultra-Violet (UV) rays which penetrate your skin and can cause severe sunburn or suntan. Even when sitting in the shade, these rays can reflect off water, sand and snow. Because the sun's potential for harm is so great, you should never purposely tan or sunbathe. The results can be painfully unhealthy.

If possible, you should also avoid the sun between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. The sun causes the most damage during this period. Try to perform outdoor tasks in the early morning or early evening. And when you have to be out in the sun, wear loose clothing that covers large areas of your body. Also, wear a wide brimmed hat to protect your face and sunglasses to shade your eyes.

Because prolonged exposure to UV rays can cause cataracts, it is important to find sunglasses that are certified to block UV rays.

Most of all, be sure to use sunscreen lotions. Only use lotions that have a sun protection factor (SPF) number labeled on the bottle. Look for a number of at least 15 or greater. These sunscreens will protect your skin by blocking, absorbing and reflecting harmful UV rays.

Once wrinkles begin to form, there are a few over-the-counter products you can use to help soothe and soften dry skin. Facial creams containing alpha hydroxy acid penetrate wrinkles and help your skin hold moisture. This temporarily soothes the skin and makes it more elastic.

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Warning Signs

Many people throw caution to the wind and sunbathe anyway. And while tan bodies may look "healthy," over time they may develop something worse than wrinkles: skin cancer.

Some skin cancers are treatable if caught in time. If you find abnormally shaped moles, red blotches, multi-colored spots, open sores or bumpy, pink warty growths on your body, you may be showing early signs of one or several different kinds of skin cancers. It is important that you immediately see your dermatologist if you find any of these visible skin ailments. Early treatment can help.

Wrinkles and skin cancer can be avoided — just protect yourself from the sun early in life.

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