Sun Protection Misconceptions

Shining A Light On Sunscreen

(NAPSA)—Despite the flood of sun-protection information that is released each summer, many consumers still don't know as much as they should when it comes to choosing a sunscreen.

While sunscreen may already be a beach bag necessity, certain sunscreen technologies and ingredients will provide superior protection from the sun's harmful rays, so it's important to know what to look for when reading the label.

Sunlight contains the visible light we can see and ultraviolet (UV) rays that we cannot. UVB rays are responsible for sunburns as well as certain kinds of skin cancers, while UVA rays penetrate deep into the skin and are associated with wrinkling, leathering, sagging and the development of dark spots.

UVA can enhance the carcinogenic effects of UVB rays—the light penetrates windows and clouds and leaves no visible signature on your skin. Most consumers don't know that the SPF rating on the sunscreen bottle only pertains to UVB. That's why dermatologists say to look for a sunscreen label that specifically includes UVA protection. The FDA, however, is now working on new packaging regulations intended to help make labeling clearer.

Also, according to the FDA, sunscreens are neither perspiration- or waterproof. Sunscreens can be washed or worn off as a consequence of swimming or sweating, so consumers are advised to look for products that are water resistant or sweat resistant—FDA approved terms.

Another common misconception is that you can apply sunscreen once and be protected all day. "Ordinary UVA sunscreen chemicals break down as soon as they are exposed to light and become practically ineffective in about one hour," says Boston dermatologist Dr. Jeffrey Dover. "It's not just full-spectrum coverage we need to be concerned with; the key is finding a product with UVB and UVA protection, but also one that lasts longer." Recently, new technologies including Dermaplex™ have been created to help keep the key sun-protection ingredients stable so they won't break down for hours and therefore don't need to be reapplied as often.

Sunlight contains ultraviolet (UV) rays that we cannot see. It is these UV rays—both UVA and UVB—that can do the most damage to the skin.

Sunscreens like the new Continuous Spray SPF 45 from Skin Effects™ by Dr. Jeffrey Dover use Dermaplex technology so it won't break down after sun exposure for up to five hours, allowing for full-spectrum UVA/UVB protection. Plus, it holds up against sweat and water, is hypoallergenic, sprays on easily and is recommended by the Skin Cancer Foundation.

Most important, sunscreens have an expiration date. Dermatologists recommend buying a new bottle every six months.

Skin Effects by Dr. Jeffrey Dover is available at all CVS/pharmacy locations.