

Advice from Dr. Zhukova

Suntan can be beneficial when taken in moderation

Summer will come soon and it will be possible to sunbathe. Are there any restrictions for sunbathing?

Veronika Petrovskaya, Gomel

Suntan is the change of skin colour (skin darkening) under the impact of ultraviolet beams. Darkening arises because of the formation and accumulation of a specific pigment (melanin) in lower layers of the skin.

In ancient times it was noted that dark colour of skin visually roughens appearance. Therefore, suntan was considered a symbol of courage. In Ancient Egyptian art, on Pompeian frescos and pictures of European artists, men were depicted suntanned while women were white-skinned. Before the 20th century, the aristocracy avoided getting a suntan because it was a sign of peasants constantly working in the fields.

However, at present time many people sunbathe without measure, considering suntan to give health and attractiveness to skin. Illusions concerning the positive estimation of deep suntan are connected with the beginning of the 20th century, when it was found out that under the influence of sunlight, bone building vitamin D is formed in the skin. But by the 80s it became obvious that excessive suntan provoked the accelerated ageing of skin, and in interaction with other factors (heredity, skin type, diet, way of life, ecological conditions) was a risk factor for melanoma disease (the most dangerous type of a malignant skin tumour). Excessive time in the sun can cause sterility of both men, and women. Excessive ultraviolet irradiation can also weaken the immune system and raise the risk of infectious diseases.

Undoubtedly, a stay in the sun has also positive effects. Under the influence of ultraviolet beams, the formation of the vitamin D becomes more active, and this vitamin is nec-



It is important not to overdo it while sunbathing

essary for the body for absorption of calcium and phosphorus, which are responsible for the strengthening of muscles and bones and for the healing of wounds. However, for the maintenance of the necessary level of vitamin D in the body, it is enough to expose your hands and face to the sun 2-3 times a week for 5-15 minutes during the summer months. Old people will also benefit from sunbathing, but it is better to consult the doctor. Sunbaths help with muscular and joint pains.

Ultraviolet activates the majority of processes happening in the body: breath, metabolism, blood circulation and the activity of the endocrine system. It is proved that, under influence of ultraviolet rays, the content of antibodies in blood increases and this raises our resistance to infectious diseases and viruses. Ultraviolet is successfully used in the treatment of various skin diseases, such as eczema, psoriasis and acne. Staying in the sun raises one's mood and helps to avoid stress.

There exists a widespread misconception that suntan received by means tanning equipment, (in solariums) protects the skin from sunburn during the holiday spent times. Actually, received in this way, offer only limited protection to the skin against burns from solar ultraviolet.

Sensitivity to ultraviolet irradiations is different among different people, especially children. Dark-haired people with dark skin sunbathe faster than blondes and red-haired people, who tend to have thinner and gentler skin and very often get sunburned because of the ultraviolet. People with very white skin are not recommended to sunbathe.

There are rules of safe tanning for healthy people which will help to protect from the negative influence of ultraviolet and to get a beautiful and even suntan:

If you spend your holidays in tropical countries like Spain, Italy, Bulgaria or Africa, do not sunbathe in the open sun for more than 5 minutes during the first days. Then gradually increase time of your stay

in the sun. In this way, the effect of the suntan will please you. Remember that it is not recommended to sunbathe more than an hour.

The best time to stay in the sun is in the morning — from 9am till 11am and in the evening — from 4pm and before sunset. The most dangerous period, when the rays are especially active, is from approximately 12am till 3pm in the afternoon.

Before going to the beach, do not use washing gel or soap, as they degrease the skin and destroy its protective layer.

It is better not to use lotion and perfume as they raise the sensitivity of cells to ultraviolet and this can cause the appearance of separate pigment spots on the skin.

Do not forget to use lip-balm in order to prevent the weathering of the lips. It is also better not to use make-up, because uneven and darker areas can appear on the skin.

Cover the head in order not to overheat and not to receive sunstroke. Do not neglect sunglasses

or shady hats. Ultraviolet also damages the retinas.

Water reflects the sun, therefore be careful when standing near the coast or choosing a place at the 'front' of the beach.

Eat half an hour before going to the beach, do not sunbathe and swim right after meal or on an empty stomach (you may have dizziness or sickness).

Use sun-protective cosmetics. The general efficiency of such creams is estimated by their SPF number (Sun Protection Factor). SPF shows how many times you can increase the duration of your stay in the sun thanks to the protective cream. Adults need 30ml (or 6 teaspoons) of cream for a single application. A thin layer of cream reduces the efficiency of protection against ultraviolet.

Put the protective cream or lotion on in advance, half an hour before appearing in the sun, in order that there will be time for the skin to absorb it and start operating.

Do not forget to repeatedly apply cream during the day — a minimum of one time during each three hours and after each bathing is recommended. Special attention should be given to the shoulders, neck, chest area, knees, and also ears and sensitive skin round eyes, as these parts burn faster.

If you have problems with skin or an allergic reaction to ultraviolet which is evident by red rash, itch and peeling, or if you have a lot of birthmarks on body then it is recommended that you do not sunbathe. It is also not recommended to sunbathe if taking antibiotics and some other medicines.

For protection against direct sunlight use first of all tents, then canopies, hats, and also loose, light clothes which do not transmit the ultraviolet beams.

By Tatiana Zhukova,
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No need to travel to far off lands

In our modern days, many people — young and elderly alike — complain about being bored. They have nothing to do, nowhere to go and have little money to travel far away. I'd like to propose my own recipe for making life much more interesting.

Since my student years, our family has been fond of travelling. At present, we are 'discovering' our native Belarus — jointly with our children. We surf Belarus' Globe Internet portal (or other sources) to find an interesting destination for our short trips.

Not long ago, we visited Vidzy and were very impressed by the

local Roman Catholic church. Previously, we have been to Mir, Nesvizh, the Belovezhskaya Pushcha, the Berezinsky Reserve, Slonim, Polotsk and the memorial complexes of Proryv (Breakthrough) and Khatyn. Sometimes, we didn't wish to drive ourselves, so we would take an organised excursion; we visited Lida Castle in this way. I would advise anyone to visit this place. You will enjoy the unique building and will love the Jagaillo Wedding performance (staged by the Lida Local Lore Museum staff).

We visited the Stochitsy Architectural-Ethnographical Museum several times — spending a whole day there. It's a pleasure



Foreign tourists will find routes to their liking

to enjoy the local wooden architecture, participate in national customs and taste the Belarusian cuisine. In winter, we visit Zyuzya Poozersky in the Postavy forests.

Sometimes, we call our friends, create a company of 6-8 and travel

like VIPs by mini-bus. A trip like this is not a problem for our family budget, it always brings us a lot of joy and pleasure and our children are always excited about each new trip.

Victor Zaichenko, Minsk

Striking moments of Bagration operation

Land of Courage and Glory exhibition of archive documents and photos marking 70th anniversary of liberation of Belarus from Nazis opened in foyer of convention hall of Council of the Republic

The focus of the exhibition was the biggest offensive operation by the Red Army, which liberated all Belarus, as well as part of Lithuania, Latvia and Poland. The photos turn our attention on Red Army men, partisans and civilians — including the role of women, who received their own section. Their works included helping the air force, some became snipers and many were medical workers. The exhibition featured documents showing how the economy of Belarus recovered in the post-war years.