

Body & Soul

Putting suntans in the shade ...

IT IS hard to believe that, before the 1920s, being brown was far from the trend of the day. Instead, dedicated followers of fashion would shun the sun, hide behind parasols and use cosmetics to make their skin as pale as possible.

But a series of sizzling summers during the 1920s popularised sunbathing, although in its early days it was pursued only by nudists.

Since then, the quest for a nut-brown complexion has never really gone away in the western world, despite repeated warnings from the medical profession that too much sun can lead to skin damage and even cancer.

The warm, sunny weather over the past few days has already seen thousands of people stripping off their clothes and basking in the sunshine.

Coincidentally, this outbreak of sun coincides with Sun Awareness Week, which ends tomorrow and, to mark the occasion, staff at two Northampton skin clinics are speaking out about how to avoid sun damage and how to treat it.

Despite years of education about the risks of prolonged sunbathing, it seems young people are still suffering skin damage as a result of excessive sunbed use.

Sinead Sweeney, a lead nurse at the Sk:n clinic in Cheyne Walk, Northampton, said: "We get a lot of younger people – in their 20s and 30s – who have obviously used sunbeds and are presenting with pigmentation."

"There are young girls who are presenting pigmentation which can be seen under the naked eye. It could be from sunbeds or from when people go on holiday and lie under the sun for hours."

Her comments follow the publica-



■ Dr Askari Townshend demonstrates how an intense pulse light machine works to Anna Brosnan at his clinic in St Giles Terrace, Northampton
C E picture 080507TC2



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tion of a Cancer Research UK poll which reveals that a third of under-25s spend over five hours a day in the sun on holiday. And actress and presenter Denise Van Outen has

recently confessed to having scarred her skin using sunbeds.

Ms Sweeney said the UV rays of a 'Woods lamp' can be used with clients to reveal signs of sun damage which may not be visible to the naked eye. "Normally we do a skin assessment, which is free of charge, and then there is a consultation. We put them under a Woods lamp and it is a good education tool, as they can see the damage first hand."

Dr Askari Townshend, a surgeon who has just opened the Townshend Skin Clinic in St Giles Terrace, says he sees older women with extensive sun damage sustained during the

1960s and '70s, when sunbathing was at the height of fashion. "They have sun lines and wrinkles and sun spots from years of accumulative sun damage, and age. There are other things too, like broken veins. Some might have a pinky, mottled impression on their chest. You can wear a hat but, even with a sunhat, you can't protect your chest."

At Townshend, an intense pulse light machine – which uses different wavelengths – can be used as a treatment, to break up pigmentation.

But Dr Townshend reinforces the fact that education is an important part of the work carried out by skin-care professionals.

"The first important thing is education – a lot of people come in with problems and don't realise they are the result of sun damage. We get them wearing make-up with sun protection factor and make sure that, when they sunbathe, they are sensible and don't spend all day, every day in the sun."

For an in-depth skin consultation call Dr Askari Townshend on 01604 637934 or visit www.townshendskinclinic.co.uk

Some sun creams IN THE SHOPS

Avon's Bronze Kids Waterproof Sun Lotion SPF50 pledges to offer "maximum protection for your children's skin".

Soltan Kids Suncare Lotion (SPF30), said to be designed to reduce the sun's burning effect on the skin by up to 30 times, extra water-resistant and developed with children's skin in mind.

Nivea Sun moisturising sun lotion (SPF 20), described as combining UVA/UVB filters which help protect skin against sunburn and premature ageing, non-sticky, easily absorbed and water resistant. Piz Buin Sun Lotion Combi Pack (SPF 8/15), said to be an oil-free formula with moisturisers to prevent the skin peeling.

How to ... pick the right suntan lotion

CHEAP sunblocks are usually just as good as expensive ones. They are all tested the same way, and it is the level of protection they give you that is the most important thing. This is the sun protection factor, or SPF.

Make sure you check the use-by date. Most creams will last two or three years, but really

old bottles will not do the job. There is a huge range out there and it can be quite confusing about what to buy. You should choose a product that protects against UVA and UVB radiation. This may be labelled 'broad spectrum'. The higher factor sunscreen you buy, the more it will protect against UVB radiation.

For instance, with a factor 15 cream, only seven per cent of the harmful UVB rays get through, and with factor 60 it is only two per cent. Factor 15 is often the standard factor people look for, although, if you are fair-skinned and susceptible to burning, a higher factor may be more suitable. No cream can offer you total

protection. UVA protection is shown by zero to five stars. But this is only a rough guide, because it is also affected by the SPF. A cream with SPF 25 and three stars may give more UVA protection overall than a cream with SPF 10 and four stars. Put it on before you go in the

sun and apply it before any moisturiser or insect repellent. You should re-apply sunscreen after swimming, even if it says it is water-resistant on the label. As a minimum, apply every two hours. Don't spread it thinly – you should be able to see the sunscreen.

Health WARNING

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Painkiller may cut dementia risk

Long-term use of ibuprofen may reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, a large US study reports.

Data from almost 250,000 veterans showed those who used the painkiller for more than five years were more than 40% less likely to develop Alzheimer's.

The study in Neurology reported that some other similar painkillers may also have a protective effect. Dementia experts said the results were interesting but warned against people taking ibuprofen to reduce their risk.



Ibuprofen was the most commonly used painkiller in the study.

Pain killer

A COMMONLY used painkiller could cut a person's risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, according to a study carried out in America. The data – taken from 250,000 people – showed that those who had used ibuprofen for more than five years were at least 40 per cent less likely to develop the condition. Although dementia experts found the results interesting, they warned against people deliberately using ibuprofen to reduce their Alzheimer's risk.

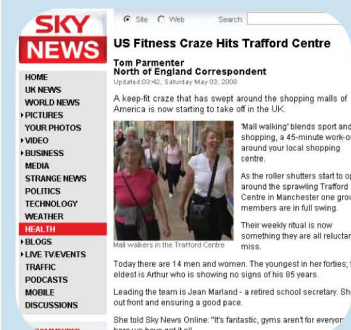
Source: www.bbc.co.uk/news



Lost libido

INCREASING numbers of middle-aged men are going off sex, according to relationship experts. The counselling and sex therapy charity Relate reports that it has seen a 40 per cent increase in men who did not want to make love to their partners. Yet, 10 years ago, the number of men contacting Relate because of a loss of libido was virtually nil. It is believed that changing sexual roles among men and women, as well as increased levels of depression in men, could be behind the change.

Source: www.telegraph.co.uk



Bags of energy

A KEEP-FIT craze which has swept the shopping malls of the USA has now started to become popular in the UK. 'Mall walking' blends sport and shopping and involves a 45-minute workout in a local shopping centre. Groups are now carrying out this weekly ritual at Manchester's Trafford Centre.

Source: news.sky.com