



Surprising Skin Savers

The basic rules of skin cancer prevention are well publicized: Slather on a broad-spectrum SPF year-round, limit sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., and check yourself regularly for unusual or changing moles and freckles. But researchers keep turning up new (and sometimes unexpected) ways to protect yourself. While these moves won't replace those axioms, they just might improve your odds.

► CLEAN UP

When you're out and about in the city, the tiny particles found in smog can accumulate on your skin, even if you don't see them. Because these may

contain toxins that damage the DNA of cells, letting them linger there might make you more prone to skin cancer, says Mona Gohara, M.D., assistant clinical professor

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Man Gray enjoys the sunshine on a deserted beach on the Fleurieu Peninsula while the classic ketch *Lady Eugenie* waits offshore.

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of dermatology at Yale School of Medicine. "To reduce your risk, take a few minutes when you get home every night to wash your face, arms, and other exposed areas with a mild cleanser like CeraVe or Cetaphil."

➔ **MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT**

Several studies have suggested a link between obesity and skin cancer. "That may be because people who are overweight often have high blood sugar levels, which can cause an inflammatory reaction in the skin," says

Diane Berson, M.D., associate professor of dermatology at Weill Cornell Medical College.

➔ **DRINK SOME POMEGRANATE JUICE**

"It's high in antioxidants, the warriors against free radicals created by UV light," says Gohara. Snacking on blueberries, blackberries, and raspberries is also smart.

➔ **COOK A CURRY DISH**

The yellow spice contains turmeric, a compound shown in lab studies to inhibit the development of skin cancer.

➔ **WATCH YOUR ALCOHOL INTAKE**

Booze may decrease the concentration of protective carotenoids in the skin, according to a new small study published in the journal *Skin Pharmacology and Physiology*. On a practical level, overimbibing also makes you more likely to forget to reapply sunscreen.

➔ **POP A SUPPLEMENT**

Recent research from the University of Colorado shows that milk thistle extract might help damaged skin repair itself, thanks to a compound

called silibinin. Or try Heliocare Oral or Fernblock, two products that contain antioxidant-rich Polypodium leucotomos extract. As with any herb or supplement, check with your doctor first to make sure it's okay for you to take.

➔ **KICK BUTTS**

There are lots of reasons you shouldn't smoke (cancer, heart disease, and so on), and here's another one: A meta-analysis from the U.K. found that the habit could raise your risk of squamous cell carcinoma by 52 percent.

SCARY TRUTH ONE IN FIVE AMERICANS WILL DEVELOP SKIN CANCER IN HIS OR HER LIFETIME. SOURCE: AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DERMATOLOGY



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