

Summer skin

SUMMER IS HERE! While most Aussies relish the opportunity to get beachside, poolside or simply out and about in the sunshine, I doubt any of us are happy about what it's doing to our skin. And here's the ultra-scary truth about those ultraviolet rays: The sun is quite literally accelerating the age of our skin far beyond our actual chronological age. Extra wrinkles? check! Thinning skin? Check! Blotchy, pigmented skin? Check! Knowing how best to protect yourself from this fact of Aussie-life isn't quite as simple as slapping on some sunscreen when you're at the beach if you really want to stop (and possibly reverse) premature ageing this summer.

Firstly, you need to know the basics of how the sun is ageing you in the first place. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation (both UVA and UVB) is responsible for free radical formation and inefficient DNA repair. What people don't realise is that the UV radiation that causes the damage is not seen or felt – just because you didn't tan or get burnt, it doesn't mean you have avoided damage.

We also grossly underestimate our sun exposure. Brief moments like walking to the car, driving during the day time or hanging the washing out accumulate to an enormous number of hours in the sun over our lifetime. Even if you are only exposed to the sun for 10 minutes a day (which is almost impossible), by 80 you will have spent 5000 hours soaking up the rays!

Fortunately, science can explain the correlation between UV radiation and premature ageing and therefore assist us in tackling the problem. In addition to medical-grade treatments that can restore the skin to its former glory, there are a few things we can do every day to avoid ageing beyond our years!

The Science

UV radiation cannot be seen or felt

The ageing effects of UV radiation are caused by Free Radical Formation and DNA Damage and include:

- Thinning skin
- Wrinkles
- Discolouration and pigmentation
- Volume loss as collagen is broken down
- Appearance of blood vessels
- Dry, dull skin

The Solution

Sunscreen! Every. Single. Day. (rain, hail or shine)

Tip: Find one that works for you, is non-greasy, goes under your make-up - if you like it, you're more likely to wear it, and good sunscreens do exist!

Antioxidants are essential to combat free radicals. In both topical and ingested forms, Vitamin C is a potent antioxidant that not only assists in DNA reparation, but plays a key role in collagen production.

Retinol (or Vitamin A), once wrongly thought to make skin more sensitive to the sun, is now considered crucial in both reversing sun damage (removes pigment, treats fine wrinkles and thickens the skin) as well as actually protecting the skin from further damage at a DNA level.

Tip: Topical skin care needs to be scientifically formulated to penetrate the skin so don't waste money on over-the-counter products.



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