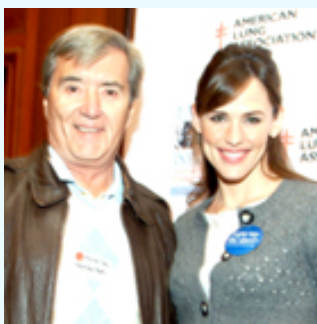




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Skin Care

Author: Denise Mann Kleinman Last Updated: Jun 25, 2008 - 1:39:23 PM

Lupus Patients Need More Devotion to Sunscreen

By Denise Mann Kleinman

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Physicians need to step up their efforts to convince lupus patients to protect themselves from the sun ...Obermoser G, et al. *Lupus*. 2008;17:525-527.



(HealthNewsDigest.com) - INNSBRUCK, Austria—Physicians need to step up their efforts to convince lupus patients to protect themselves from the sun, according to Gerlinde Obermoser, MD, and Bernhard Zelger, MD, of Innsbruck Medical University in Austria, in an editorial in *Lupus*¹.

"Patients with lupus have a triple need for photoprotection," the authors write. Lupus patients are more photosensitive than non-lupus subjects. Furthermore, they run the same risks for photoaging of the skin, ultraviolet (UV) immunosuppression, and skin cancer, but are

further endangered by many systemic immunosuppressive treatments, which can further increase the risk of non-melanoma skin cancer. "Photoprotection begins with patient awareness and modified behavior," the authors write.

Photoprotection for lupus patients begins (but doesn't necessarily end) with:

Avoidance of sun exposure between 11 am and 3 PM, especially during the summer
Wearing hats and protective clothing. "Dark and tightly woven fabrics are more efficient in blocking UV light or special UV protection clothing," they write.

Wearing UV protective sunglasses and lip balms

Choosing vacation seasons and destinations carefully

Avoiding tanning salons

Applying broad spectrum sunscreens with a sub protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher and high degree of UVA blockers 30 minutes before going into the sun

Applying sunscreen liberally using 1/3 of a spoon for an adult face and a handful to cover the entire body

Reapplying sunscreen regularly even if it says "water-proof" because water, sweating, toweling and sand all reduce the amount on the skin.

"Depending on patient factors like disease activity and their and degree of photosensitivity, and external factor like the time of the day and 'reflective' environment (snow and water), application of sunscreens may be necessary even on cloudy days," the editorialists point out.

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Translating research into practice

Two leading New York City dermatologists agree with the advice dispensed in the editorial and, in certain instances, take it one step further, by expanding the time frame in which lupus patients should avoid the sun and upping the SPF in sunscreens.

"Lupus is a condition that goes with sun sensitivity, and most lupus patients burn very easily, so they must protect their skin from sun in the summer and winter," said Judith Hellman, MD, an assistant professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City. "They need to be counseled to avoid the sun between 10 AM and 4 PM and use proper protection even on a cloudy day because a lot of sun comes through the clouds," she told MSKreport. "Clothing lets through some of the sun so lupus patients should apply sunscreen before they put on clothes and re-apply it periodically."

Neil Sadick, MD, a clinical associate professor of dermatology at New York Presbyterian Hospital--Cornell Medical Center agrees. "Lupus patients need to be extra-careful because they are more photosensitive," he said. "They need to avoid mid-day sun, use a broad spectrum UVA-UVB sunscreen and step up the sun protection factor to 45 and wear sun protective clothing avoidance," he told MSKreport.com

"If they are taking sun-sensitizing medications, they should stay out of the sun," Dr. Sadick said.

Reference

1. Obermoser G, Zelger B. Triple need for photoprotection in lupus erythematosus. *Lupus*. 2008;17:525-527.

"Patients with lupus have a triple need for photoprotection." Gerlinde Obermoser, M.D., and Bernhard Zelger, MD
Lupus. 2008;17:525-527.

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photosensitivity, lupus, sunscreen, UV

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