



“Coaches Corner” – Sunscreen

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Living with a bullous skin disease is a challenge in more ways than one. In addition to taking medication we also need to be taking supplements, avoid certain foods and spices, take caution in how we move and bathe, and relax to reduce stress.

We also need to take extra precautions against the sun’s harmful rays...more so than the average person who does not have pemphigus or pemphigoid.

It isn’t always a sunny day that can bring the harmful rays. Cloudy days can be deceiving – you can get your worst sunburns through the clouds. Reflections from the water in swimming pools, lakes, oceans, etc. increase the harmful effects of the sun’s rays as well as the reflections from the snow when skiing.

Women also need to make sure that their foundation has an SPF ingredient – this was told to me by the national makeup advisor for Dior. I never knew this! But it does help...even if we don’t actively stay out in the sun and are just running around doing errands.

According to the American Academy of Dermatology:

“Dermatologists recommend using a sunscreen with an SPF block of at least 30, which blocks 97% of the sun’s rays. Just make sure it offers a broad-spectrum (UVA and UVB) protection, an SPF of 30 or greater, and is water resistant.”

Before trying to figure out which brand is the best to buy, discuss with your dermatologist. He/she can make suggestions for you based on your skin’s level of activity.

Don’t forget your ears, too! Ear lobes are very sensitive and need protection. For those of you with scalp involvement, it is best to consult with your dermatologist who will recommend what sunscreen products are best for the scalp. Hats are advisable when venturing outside. Solid hats...not straw as the sun’s rays will stream through the weaves and cause damage! Take extra care with the “driver’s arm” — you know, your arm that is exposed to the sun when you’re driving? The sun’s rays are intensified through the glass windows. Best to be sure you are either wearing long sleeves or extra sunscreen. If you are going in the water, sunscreen needs to be reapplied often.

UV radiation also impairs the skin’s immune system in alarming ways. Sun exposure reduces the number of watchdog cells that help recognize and respond to antigens, and alters their function so they are as effective as dozing prison guards. “This effect on immune suppression can set in even before a sunburn,” Dr. Baron said.

Reference: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/14/fashion/14SKIN.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Remember, when you need us we are always in your corner!