

Sunburn Can Impair Your Immune System

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Excerpt from a study by Dr. Faith Strickland, University of Texas, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

In years past it was popularly supposed that a deep suntan made us look better than the pale look we wore during the winter months... as though a mahogany tan meant that we could afford to go south for the winter, or to some sun-drenched island, instead of having to work for a living like our contemporaries. It set us apart from the drudges who worked all winter, unable to afford the sunny climates.

Well, we may have looked better (although some would dispute the fact), but it turns out that what we were really doing was bringing about potentially serious damage to our skin and immune systems.

Recent studies have shown that a bad sunburn, even one that we might have suffered many years ago, can turn into cancer in later life. Not all of these cancers turn out to be melanoma, the really serious form of skin cancer, and may be surgically removed. But melanoma can metastasize, or spread through the body, and that becomes a serious problem, indeed.

Now we have information that sunburn can, and often does, wreak havoc with the body's immune system, leaving us vulnerable to other diseases. The immune system helps keep us well by providing the body's primary defense against those germs and viruses that it recognizes as "foreign bodies." When it is functioning well, we may expect to remain reasonably healthy. When it is compromised, illness results, in most cases, since our bodies are constantly being bombarded by things that can make us ill.

Exposure to Ultra Violet-B light, from the sun, has been shown to impair the cellular immune response of the skin, which may lead to tumor formation. But the work of Dr. Faith Strickland, of the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center at the University of Texas, suggests the possibility that Aloe vera can not only stop the damage done to the immune system, but can actually restore the system to full working order.

Obviously this doesn't mean that we can go out and get a worry-free sunburn, then apply some Aloe to our skin and forget about it. Nevertheless, if you do happen to get a bit more sun than intended, it makes good sense to get yourself some Aloe vera gel and gently massage it into the affected area. It won't hurt, and it may well make you feel a good deal better.

The research done by Dr. Strickland and hundreds of other researchers and scientists is mounting up, resulting in a more complete understanding of the therapeutic value of Aloe vera gel and the many ways in which Aloe can contribute to the health and well-being of people throughout the world.

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