

# Sunburn & Sun Stroke

The sun emits two kinds of ultra-violet ray: UVA and UVB. UVA penetrates deep into the skin, triggering allergies and causing premature ageing and wrinkling. UVB affects the upper layers of the skin and triggers the production of melanin, which causes tanning. Too much UVB causes freckling, thickening of the skin and skin cancers. Both types can penetrate cloud and can be reflected from the surface of water, sand or snow. The higher the altitude, the more UV rays are concentrated.

## At Risk Groups

- Fair-skinned people; the elderly; babies and young children
- Those with moles or previous skin cancer
- Those taking tetracyclins or diuretics
- Those suffering from psoriasis, eczema and vitiligo

## Heat Exhaustion

Typified by headache, dizziness, nausea, cramps in the limbs or abdomen, sweating with pale clammy skin, rapid weak breathing, dehydration.

## Heat Stroke

This is much more serious, as the body is unable to cool itself after exposure to very hot sun. Characterised by heaviness or congestion in the head; giddiness as if intoxicated; headache; confusion; restlessness; hot flushed dry skin due to inability to sweat; full bounding pulse; inability to respond leading to unconsciousness.

## Sunbathing

Sunbathing has caused skin cancer rates to more than double over the past decade. 60,000 new cases of skin cancer are reported every year in England & Wales. Of these, about 2,000 people die each year. [Ref: National Institute of Clinical Study.]

## Best Advice

- Avoid the sun between 12 midday and 2 pm.
- Apply appropriate sun block (the "sun protection factor" refers to protection against UVB rays, and can range from factor 2 to factor 50) – choose a reputable brand rated at least as factor 15 (and for children factor 30).
- Keep babies completely out of the sun. With no protection, the skin potentially starts to burn after 10 minutes exposure to the sun.
- Always re-apply sun protection after swimming.
- For sun stroke, cramps or severe headache, rehydration is essential. To make a rehydration mixture, dissolve ½ teasp of salt with 8 teasp of sugar in a litre of bottled or boiled water, to sip. A rough guide to the amount of salt is that the solution should be no saltier than tears. [Ref: <http://www.rehydrate.org>.]

## Homeopathic Treatments

- *Aconite*  
Sun stroke with anxiety; sudden intense fear of death; congested face.
- *Belladonna*  
Sun stroke with severe throbbing headache; red flushed face; bounding pulse; delirium.

- ***Calendula***  
In potency or as a cream, to heal sore skin.
- ***Cantharis***  
Sunburn with blisters.
- ***Cuprum***  
Sun stroke with severe cramps and dehydration.
- ***Gelsemium***  
Giddy as if intoxicated; congested head; weakness; occipital headaches.
- ***Glonoïn***  
Waves of violent throbbing bursting pains in the head; visible throbbing of arteries in the neck.
- ***Nat Carb***  
Chronic effects of sun stroke; headaches from the sun; weakness from the sun.
- ***Sol***  
Can be used as a prophylactic (30c one dose weekly). Can also be used to treat the effects of sunburn or sun stroke.
- ***Urtica Urens***  
Stinging inflamed skin after sunburn. Hilery Dorrian recommends *Sol* 3x plus *Histamine* 3x plus *Urtica* Ø in a cream for sunburn. Or *Sol* plus *Cantharis* plus *Histamine* 30c orally.
- ***Nelson's Pharmacy Sun Exposure Combination***  
Contains *Nat Carb*, *Urtica*, *Beta Carotene*, *Vitamin E*, *Aloe Vera*, *Sol* and *Melanin*, all in 6c potency.
- ***Nelson's Pharmacy Heat Exhaustion Combination***  
Contains *Nat Carb* 30c, *Camphor* 5c, *Veratrum* 6c and 15c.

- ***Solace skin defence cream (Barefoot Botanicals)***  
An anti-oxidant cream to protect and help skin recover from damage caused by the sun. Organic ingredients include green tea, orange blossom, geranium.
- ***SOS antiseptic rescue spray (Barefoot Botanicals)***  
For cuts, grazes, burns, bites and stings. 100% plant origin, including Aloe Vera, Witch Hazel, Tea Tree, Lavender, Calendula and Comfrey.
- ***Solaris (Australian Bush Flower essence combination)***  
Solaris contains Mulla Mulla, which is the best essence for sunburn. You could also use Mulla Mulla on its own: 7 drops in 30 ml water as a cooling spray, for use direct onto the skin or onto dressings.
- ***Madeleine's cream (available from Helios Homeopathic Pharmacy)***  
Contains *Graphites*, *Urtica*, *Sol* and *Red*.

***Summer campaign 2006: Liz Bevan-Jones and Helen Tovey***