

5 Questions For Your... DERMATOLOGIST

1 *With so many sunscreens on the market, which one do I choose?*

Why You Should Ask: "Sunscreens work by absorbing, reflecting, or scattering the sun's rays on the skin," says Suraj Reddy, MD, FAAD, a board-certified dermatologist with Albuquerque Dermatology Associates. "They're available in many forms, including lotions, creams, and sprays. I typically recommend a broad-spectrum sunscreen that protects against both UVA and UVB rays."

Reddy suggests looking for a sunscreen of at least SPF 30 that contains oxybenzone, avobenzone (Parsol 1789), or Mexoryl.

"Brand names I like include Neutrogena, La Roche-Posay, and Aveeno," he says. "Sunscreen should be applied one half hour before going outdoors. Even water-resistant sunscreens should be reapplied often, about every two hours or after swimming, drying off or perspiring."

2 *What is the big debate regarding vitamin D?*

Why You Should Ask: "We're learning every day how important adequate vitamin D levels are to proper bone health, decreased cancer risk, and prevention of certain chronic conditions," Reddy says. "Vitamin D can be obtained either through sun exposure or through diet. In those patients who have

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a history of skin cancer or significant sun exposure. Vitamin D should be obtained through diet and vitamin supplementation. Limiting direct sun exposure to 10–15 minutes three times weekly in addition to diet should be sufficient for those not at risk for skin cancer. Patients should speak to their health care providers about their individual needs.”

3 *Are cosmetic procedures such as Botox, dermal fillers, and lasers safe?*

Why You Should Ask: “Non-invasive cosmetic procedures can be effective and rewarding,” Reddy says. “They’re often done in less than 15 minutes in an outpatient office setting. A thorough patient history and discussion of what products are best suitable is crucial to achieving an excellent result.”

Reddy says it’s an important to ask even more questions once you decide to proceed with a cosmetic procedure. “Once you find a provider, be sure to ask: What formal training did they receive in providing a particular procedure? How many procedures have they done? What are the potential side effects and how they can be corrected?”

4 *What should I do about a mole that has changed?*

Why You Should Ask: Paying attention to moles is a good idea, because any changes could mean melanoma. “You should see a qualified health provider or dermatologist when a mole exhibits any of the ABCDEs of melanoma,” Reddy says. “This acronym stands for Asymmetry, irregular Borders, variation in Color, a Diameter greater than a pencil eraser,

or it’s Evolving or looks unlike other moles on the body. Additional signs of skin cancer may include a skin lesion that spontaneously bleeds or recurrently scabs without picking.”

5 *What are the keys to healthy skin?*

Why You Should Ask: According to Reddy, simple daily skin care routines can result in a lifetime of healthy skin.

“Start with a well-rounded diet that includes plenty of anti-oxidants such as those found in fruits and vegetables in addition to plenty of water. Smoking should be avoided as it decreases blood supply bringing essential nutrients to the skin. In our sunny and dry climate a broad spectrum sunscreen and a daily moisturizer are a must. For certain patient’s adding a Retin-A or retinol cream nightly can prevent fine lines and diminish age spots from occurring,” he says.