



A publication of the Student Health Advisory Council and the Student Health Service

Overdone in the sun

Although viewed as healthy, there is no such thing as a “healthy tan.” Some people tend to burn while others tan. Factors, which increase the chance of sunburn, include: a light complexion, light colored hair, the time of day, amount of exposure and even altitude. Some medications such as oral contraceptives, antibiotics, tranquilizers, and topical products may cause a photosensitivity reaction.



Protective measures should be used. Apply sunscreen to exposed skin 30 minutes before exposure; reapply after swimming. Don't forget the nose, face, ears and shoulders. Use a sunscreen with a SPF (sun protective factor) of at least 15 or more. Some dermatologists recommend a minimum of 30. Use a sunscreen that is PABA free (para aminobenzoic acid) since this ingredient can irritate the skin. Try avoiding the time when the sunrays are the strongest—10 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you are in intense sun, use a total block such as zinc oxide.

Sunscreens absorb certain UV rays, but **sun-blocks** prevent the rays from penetrating the skin. Wear a hat and sunglasses in addition to your UV protection.

Although the sun feels good and the skin doesn't look red, hours later you may be surprised.

The slightly pink skin may become bright red, painful and blistered within 24 hours. What to do if this happens? Cool compresses, baths several times a day, and the use of a pain reliever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) may help. Avoid harsh or scented soaps; avoid petroleum jelly; and benzocaine products which can cause allergic reactions and, finally, don't pop any blisters.

Consult a health care provider if you develop a headache, rash, nausea, vomiting or a fever.

What may happen to your skin after years of unprotected exposure? The skin develops brown areas known as “liver spots” as well as thickens, sags, and wrinkles. The eyes may develop cataracts. With long-term exposure to the sun, the risk of cancer increases. The three main types of skin cancer are basal cell, squamous cell, and melanoma. Basal cell usually occurs in those with light hair and complexion; those who easily burn and don't tan. It appears as shiny, fleshy, slow-growing nodules. Squamous cell usually appears on the face, ears, lips, and mouth of fair-skinned people as red, scaly, patches. If detected early, both types have a high cure rate. Melanoma, the most dangerous form, usually appears as a dark brown or black mole with an irregular border. Lesions may become red, blue, or white. The most common sites for melanomas are the upper back in men and upper back, chest, and lower legs in women. Consult a clinician to examine suspicious lesions.

Tanning at a salon is not a healthy way to achieve a golden glow. Rays from tanning beds can penetrate deeper into the skin. As for “suntan accelerants,” the FDA warns against their use. Artificial tanning agents, which stain your skin, are generally safe.

Remember the sun's rays are everywhere so take precautions year-round whether skiing, hiking, sunbathing, in the car, or out for a walk.

ACHOO! Seasonal allergies

People can experience a heightened reaction to what are called allergens. How about you? Examples of allergens are pollen, mold, animal dander, and dust. Symptoms include nasal congestion with a runny, itchy nose and sneezing. Eyes may be reddened, watery, and itchy. Symptoms are caused by release of histamines and similar chemicals our bodies make. Spring through fall, trees, grasses, and weeds take turn pollinating.

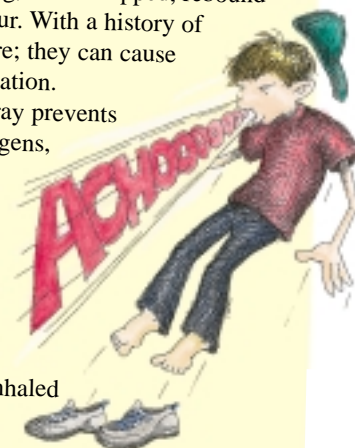
What can be done to avoid these allergens?

- Use an air conditioner which filters air.
- Close windows and doors.
- Be outdoors when pollen counts are lower (i.e. early morning).
- Shower to wash pollens off.

If limiting your exposure to pollen is not sufficient, these are other options:

- Antihistamines block histamine's effects and are best used before exposure to allergens. Some don't require a prescription (i.e. brompheniramine, chlorpheniramine, or triprolidine). These may provide relief but cause drowsiness or dry mouth. Newer antihistamines are less likely to cause tiredness or dry mouth but require a prescription.
- Decongestants relieve stuffiness whether taken as pills, nasal sprays or drops. If sprays or drops are used for too long, when stopped, rebound congestion can occur. With a history of hypertension beware; they can cause blood pressure elevation.
- Cromolyn nasal spray prevents the reaction to allergens, taking two to four weeks to work, but is an option.
- Taken by mouth or inhaled, corticosteroids reduce reaction of nasal tissues to allergens. In an inhaled form, they can take two weeks or so to work. Inhaled, they tend to have less side effects.
- Eye drops can counteract allergic responses. Some drops, like decongestant nasal sprays, can cause problems if used for more than a few days.
- Allergy shots may help. Small doses of allergens are given regularly. When given at set intervals the body gets used to the allergen, no longer overreacting. Shots can be given at the Student Health Center if previously prescribed by a private allergist.

Spring is here, along with unseen allergens. Be prepared so you can enjoy it!



UD Student Health Service
• Laurel Hall •

Campus Emergencies9-911

Appointments/Information.....831-2226

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Tummy bug bugging you?

Sometime during our life most of us will have an unpleasant but memorable experience called gastroenteritis. It is commonly called intestinal flu, traveler's diarrhea, stomach virus, and the 24-hour virus. Symptoms vary depending on the irritant and level of the GI tract involved—the stomach, intestine, or both. Discomfort may persist for 2–4 days. You may feel weak, tired, and even have a fever. You may have stomach or abdominal cramping or pains as well as nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Sometimes you may have vomiting and diarrhea at the same time and may be afraid to leave the bathroom. The onset is usually sudden and is self-limiting. Those who are at risk are the young, elderly, those with chronic illness, and foreign travelers.

What causes this problem? Bacteria, viruses, amoebae and parasites can infect the GI tract. Irritation and inflammation may result from the use of harsh laxatives or an allergic reaction to medicine (antibiotics). Other causes are ingestion of chemical toxins from seafood and plants (mushrooms), enzyme deficiencies, and the inability to digest and absorb carbohydrates (lactose intolerance).

There are several things

that you can do to help feel better. Rest is important. If you feel achy or have a fever, try acetaminophen (Tylenol®) instead of ibuprofen (Advil®); it is less irritating to the stomach. You may try an anti-diarrheal/anti-emetic with bismuth like Peptol Bismol®. Antibiotics may be prescribed for a bacterial or parasitic infection. Nutritional support is extremely important so that dehydration does not occur. **Day one**, wait 4 hours until after vomiting. Then begin with ice chips or small sips of clear liquids. Then try adding tea, Power Ade®, Gatorade®, popsicles, Jell-O®, or regular soda (not diet soda); you need the calories. Avoid all dairy products. **Day two**, continue drinking clear liquids, and add small amounts of bland foods like bananas, rice, clear

soups, crackers, and vanilla wafers. Again avoid all dairy products. **Day three**, continue with the clear liquids, and eat small meals gradually adding potatoes and breads. Avoid coffee plus spicy and greasy foods like pizza and hot dogs.

What preventative measures are there? It is important to wash hands with soap and water after going to the bathroom, touching an animal (even your pet) and as you prepare food. Wash all cooking utensils and surfaces

well. Foods should be cooked properly and perishables refrigerated.

Foreign travelers should avoid eating raw vegetables such as salads. Eat foods that are properly cooked or that can be peeled. Avoid drinking tap water or beverages containing ice cubes; instead drink bottled beverages (make sure that the seal is not broken). Avoid brushing your teeth with tap water and getting water in your mouth while swimming or showering. Remember the Center for Disease Control's advice: if you can't boil, cook, or peel it, then forget it.

You should seek medical help if the following occur: symptoms persist longer than 24 hours; diarrhea appears bloody or black in appearance or there is bloody urine; abdominal pain is localized or the abdomen becomes hard or swollen; if vomiting persists or the fluid appears bloody or like "coffee grounds"; if you develop any of the following symptoms: fever, chills, rash, joint pain, wrinkled skin, excessive thirst, and decrease in urination.

Life is full of memories and, hopefully, those of gastroenteritis will be few and far between.



Ticked off

Spring has sprung! Along with the birds, flowers, and budding trees comes the arrival of the insect population. Although most insects are harmless, there are a few that can cause discomfort and possibly serious health concerns. Lyme disease is currently the most frequently reported vector-borne illness in the United States.

Lyme disease is transmitted by the deer and lone-star ticks. A tick can transmit a spirochete germ from an animal host to humans. Symptoms of Lyme disease usually begin 3 days to 4 weeks after a bite. A spreading ring-like rash appears at the site of the bite. The rash is typically about 4 inches in size and may feel warm, itchy, or painful. A rash may appear elsewhere after the spirochete moves through the body. In the early stages most people feel flu-like symptoms, joint pain and swelling, especially in the knees, wrists, and ankles. Cardiac and neurological symptoms occur less frequently. Although a blood test exists for Lyme disease, diagnosis is often made based on clinical signs and symptoms. Early treatment with antibiotics usually halts the progression of the disease.

Prevention, however, is the best way to avoid problems in the first place. Ticks exist worldwide in wooded areas, high grasses, and brush. They are most prevalent during spring and summer. When outdoors, the use of an insect repellent containing DEET can be very effective in warding off ticks. Wear long pants and tuck them into your socks in areas where ticks are plentiful. Keep shirttails tucked in. Avoid sitting or lying on the ground or placing clothing on the ground. Light colored clothing allows easier visualization of the ticks. Check your body when you return from an infested area because you usually do not feel the tick bite.

If a tick becomes imbedded in your skin, prompt removal is important. Avoid handling it. Wear gloves if possible. To remove a tick, use tweezers to grasp the tick at the skin surface, below its head, and pull. Do not use nail polish, a hot match, or Vaseline to smother the tick—this may cause it to inject a spirochete into the victim's circulation. Once the tick has been removed, wash the site with antibacterial soap and apply an antibiotic ointment. If possible save the tick, recording the date and time of the bite. The tick can be identified and treatment begun if necessary.

If you reside, work, or recreate in high-risk areas, consult a clinician to determine if you are a candidate for Lymerix, a new vaccine that can prevent Lyme disease. Despite your best efforts at prevention, ticks may pay you a visit. Be aware and seek medical attention when needed. Don't let these bugs bug you.

Student Health Advisory Council

When students leave home to study at the University of Delaware, they sometimes have a need for health care. During the past academic year, over 62% of students who paid the SHS fee utilized the Student Health Service, visiting an average of 3.6 times. With these on-site health services, convenient access to care minimizes disruption of the student's academic schedule.

The Student Health Service is *your* health service. For comments and suggestions we have a "Comment Line" and suggestion boxes throughout the Student Health Service building. For students interested in more active involvement, there is a Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC). SHAC is a group of 12 to 15 students from different programs and organizations who meet to provide input on the budget and services, as well as contributing to your health service information publication YoUDee's Chicken Soup. If you would like to be a part of SHAC, contact Dr. Joseph Siebold at either 831-3699 or via e-mail at jsiebold@udel.edu.