

Well spring is here...finally. Many of us will start our spring cleaning, removing winter tires and tuning up our cars. Don't forget your body. Your body requires regular maintenance just like your car. You will be surprised how little maintenance it requires for you to live a long and strong life. Your body is designed to last 8-10 x as long as your car, but sadly many of us don't really pay any meaningful attention to it. This spring, let's make a fresh start for the rest of the year... I want you to get excited about your health!



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Stress Management

We have come through a stressful winter. Stress is a fact of life. Some might say life moves from one crisis to another. Stress may be the #1 threat to your life. So this spring let's learn how to rust-proof ourselves from the adverse effects of stress. Here's how we can develop a stress-resistant personality. If you can't avoid the stress, at least learn how to protect yourselves from its negative effects.

The #1 way to reduce stress is to talk to a friend on a daily basis. The #2 way is to exercise - regularly. The #3 way is to learn a stress protection technique: deep breathing, meditation, yoga. Then do it daily. If you would like to learn more about these techniques, call us or, even better, join us every Wednesday for our WalkSmart program, included in your membership, where I often demonstrate such techniques.



"Cardiogenix"

Cardiogenix stands for Cardio ("heart") and genesis ("rebirth of"). As spring is a time of renewal, let it also be the time for you to start or maintain an exercise program.

Get a basic pedometer. See how many steps you are doing. Then aim to increase that by 500 steps / week until you reach the magic number of 10,000 steps/day. Maintain that and you are well on your way to living better and feeling great.

A recent analysis of 26 studies found that pedometer users walked about an extra mile a day, on average, and increased their overall physical activity by 27%.



Healthy living tip #1

Want to know the most effective way for your skin to look 10 years younger?
Regular exercise!

There is no skin product, cream or lotion that will ever match the rejuvenating effects of exercise on your skin.



Healthy living tip #2

Tanning salons use varying ratios of UV A and B rays. From the information we have available so far, I would consider your risk similar to that of the sun.



The Doctor is in...

WalkSmart. Bring someone you care about for a free trial (Wednesday nights).

Listen to Dr. Oommen every Sunday from 7-8pm on 940Montreal on the Cardiogenix Health Show. Learn how to live a long, strong and happy life.

Partnership Healthcare
The power is in the partnership

We will all be soon spending more time outdoors in the months ahead. This is healthy and also helps improve our mood. Please be sure to protect yourself, and especially your kids, from the sun's harmful rays.

What is SPF?

SPF stands for the Sun Protection Factor provided by a sunscreen. It refers to a product's ability to stop your skin from burning. The higher the number of the SPF, the longer you can stay in the sun before burning.

For example, if it normally takes 10 minutes of sun exposure for skin to get a sunburn, an SPF of 15 would ideally provide 150 minutes of protection. (In actual use, protection is less because sunscreen gets washed off by sweat and water.) An SPF of 15 blocks more than 92 % of the UVB rays.

Apply sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before you go outside. As well, sunscreen should be reapplied after swimming or sweating to provide good protection.

Skin may still tan even if a sunscreen is used, since all chemical sunscreens allow some UVA rays to penetrate.



How we can choose and use sunscreen for kids



Sometimes sunscreen can cause the eyes to sting. If a baby cries or a child complains of this, try a different brand.

Use a broad-spectrum product that screens out most of the UVB and UVA rays as indicated on the label. The sun protection factor (SPF) should be a minimum of 15. If your child has particularly sensitive skin, test for an allergic reaction first before using the sunscreen all over the child. Apply it to a small patch of skin on the inner forearm for several days running. If the skin turns red or otherwise reacts, change products.

Whenever possible, apply the sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before you go outside. The active ingredients need time to combine with elements in the skin to offer maximum protection. Cover exposed areas generously, including ears, nose, the tops of feet and backs of knees. Apply frequently around the eyes, avoiding eyelids. Children tend to rub their eyes, and stinging could be a problem. Reapply frequently and liberally, particularly after swimming or sweating.

Pass up heavily scented sun-screens to avoid attracting insects to your child. Consider applying a zinc oxide product as added protection to such prominent areas as nose, cheeks, top of ears and shoulders. Zinc oxide is a non-irritating and very effective sun block.

REMEMBER: Sunscreens are not intended to increase sun exposure time but to increase protection during unavoidable exposure.

UV Radiation

We all know the sun can damage our skin causing premature aging and even cancer but most of us don't know how or why.

It can be hard to know what to look for when you need to protect your skin as it's easy to get confused about which UV ray does what. It's easier to know how to protect yourself if you know what you're protecting yourself from. The sun has 2 types of UV, (ultraviolet), rays:

1. UVA:

You're almost never safe from exposure to UVA rays as they can go through windows, light clothing and even your windshield, so if you're outside you're getting exposed to UVA rays.

UVA rays are responsible for aging. They are less likely than UVB to cause sunburn but UVA penetrates the skin more deeply, causing wrinkling and leathery of the skin. When UVA rays damage the collagen and elastin just under the top layer of our skin, it loses strength and elasticity thus causing wrinkles, sagging, leathery skin and... aging!

If that's not bad enough studies show that UVA not only exacerbates UVB's carcinogenic effects but may also directly induce some skin cancers, including melanomas.

2. UVB:

UVB rays are more potent than UVA in producing sunburn. Therefore these rays are considered the main cause of skin cancers, (basal and squamous cell carcinomas and melanoma). Sometimes called the "tanning ray", UVB rays stimulate the melanocyte cell, (located in the bottom layer of the skin), to produce the brown pigment melanin, producing a suntan as a defense against UV radiation.

So even if it's a cloudy day and you're driving in your car you're getting exposed to the harmful UV rays of the sun. That's why it's so important to protect your skin with sunscreen and UV protective clothing at all times, (especially if you're working, playing or vacationing outside).

