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An easy guide to protect you from the unbearable heat and sweat of Indian summer

# Sun safety

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**T**HE HEAT and dust of political manoeuvring is far from settling down, quite like the unrelenting summer heat. Since it's next to impossible to understand the minds of canny politicians, we'll go for the simpler option — a ready reckoner on how to protect yourself from the summer onslaught.

## SUNBURN

SUNBURN IS a tan gone wrong. It happens when over-exposure to the UV radiation makes the skin blister and peel.

**Quick fix:** Immediately after sun exposure, immerse the sunburned area in cool water, followed by moisturising. Avoid repeated sun exposure for the next few days, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the rays are strongest. "Most Indian skins do not need sunscreen and if not applied right, it can make the skin blotchy. Using physical protection such as a cap or umbrella and wearing loose clothes made of natural fibres like cotton and linen, that cover the body work better," says Dr Rohit Bhargava, senior dermatologist, Max Hospital, Noida.

If you cannot do without it, use a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15

**HEAT PROOF** Smile through the summer with the right clothes, protective gear and quick fixes

**Fatty foods, oils or strong-smelling foods like garlic, curry and onions, seep through pores, so avoid these if you have BO issues**

20 minutes before exposure and reapply every two hours.

## PIGMENTATION

THE SUMMER sun can also lead to pigmentation problems, making skin appear spotty and patchy.

**Quick fix:** Here's a home remedy to reduce pigmentation by senior dermatologist Dr Shehla Agarwal, director, Mehak Derma and Surgery Clinic. "Stir the juice of half a lemon into one cup of plain yogurt. Refrigerate and apply at bedtime. Give it five minutes to penetrate the skin and apply a thin coat of moisturiser over it, if needed, for a smoother and toned skin in three to four weeks."

## ACNE

Sweating causes the pores to get hydrated and get blocked, aggravating acne.

**Quick fix:** "Summer-induced outbreaks can be controlled by cleaning the skin twice with soap and water — not a moisturising soap but normal

soap — and drinking at least 10 glasses of water," says Dr Bhargava. "Fruits with antioxidants like vitamin C and E also help to control outbreaks from within," he adds.

## DRY, CRACKED SKIN

Exposure to the sun increases the ageing process and can cause the skin to wrinkle and crack.

**Quick fix:** Exfoliate regularly. "Summer skin cries out for moisturisation and you can't get moisture to penetrate the skin's surface unless you exfoliate it first," says Dr Agarwal.

## SWEATING AND PRICKLY HEAT

It's distressing because it stains clothes, wrecks romance and ruins social and business interactions.

**Quick fix:** Frequent cold baths followed by thorough drying and a talcum powder massage, help absorb sweat. Any talcum powder does the job; special prickly-heat powders are not needed. "A high-dose of Vitamin A (50,000 international units) once a day for 15 days will help people fight prickly heat," says Dr Agarwal. Wear loose clothes made of natural fibres to allow air to evaporate sweat quickly. Since stress also aggravates sweating, try relaxation exercises. And if you are not doing so already, drink plenty of water to help your body's cooling system run better.

## BODY ODOUR

While sweat is virtually odourless, what you smell is the bacteria breeding on the skin's surface.

**Quick fix:** Keep your body dry. Gym clothes are bacteria-breeding grounds, so wash well after a workout. "A solution of hydrogen peroxide and water can help fight body odour. Add one teaspoon of peroxide (3 per cent) to one cup (250 ml) of water. Apply this solution on affected areas (underarm, feet, and groin) with a soft cloth to destroy smelly bacteria," says Dr Agarwal.