

A burning question: How much sun is too much?



Adam Insalaco, 17, with sun reflector, and Tessa Siebert, 19, camp counselors at Camp Stella Maris, Livonia, illustrate two extremes of being out in the sun July 9 at the camp. At right, Tessa applies zinc oxide to her nose to protect it.

her to use sunscreen more frequently.

Adam Insalaco, a junior camp counselor at Stella Maris, is a strong advocate of sunscreen protection. Adam's awareness stems from his lifeguarding job last summer at Sea Breeze Park in Irondequoit - where, he said, employees were required to wear sunscreen even on cloudy days because harmful ultraviolet rays can penetrate clouds.

Adam said that many young Stella Maris campers arrive with notes from their parents, reminding counselors to make sure their children are wearing sunscreen. Adam added that it's a good idea for counselors to observe this practice as well.

"If we don't do it, we're not really setting an example for the kids," said Adam, 17, from Church of Christ the King in Irondequoit.

Another Stella Maris employee, John Phillips, said he's prone to sunburn early in the summer before his tan develops. Yet John also said he realizes that sun damage is possible after he tans, so he continues to use sunscreen while performing his grounds and maintenance job.

"Once you're tan, you're not done," remarked John, 18, from St. Joseph's/St. William's Faith Community in Livonia and Conesus.

Meanwhile, Mike Vogler describes himself as an occasional sunscreen user. When he works on his family's farm in Chili, doing such chores as baling hay, he tends not to use sunscreen protection.

"I've got the farmer's tan. I don't really burn that much," said Mike, 15, from Holy Ghost Church in Gates.

Mike explained that he's only out in the sun a couple hours at a time while working, and that much of his body is covered by clothing. "Sometimes I wear a

hat," he said.

But when he goes to the beach and wears only a swimsuit, Mike said, he does use sunscreen. And he doesn't think it's a good idea to lie out for several hours straight, so he seeks shade for at least a portion of the day.

"I'll see other kids just sitting there in the sun all day, and some of them don't even have

any lotion," Mike said.

Mike also pointed out that sunscreen eventually wears off. "Even with suntan lotion, after a period of time the sun will affect you," Mike said.

Another problem with tanning, John acknowledged, is that sun worshipers often don't take the negative effects into account until it's too late.

"You're not really thinking about it until you get burned," John said.

Even teens who get burned, Adam added, might not worry about the potential long-term effects of skin damage.

"It's all about vanity. It's who's going to be the darkest - not that you're going to look like a prune in 30 years," Adam commented.

Tessa agreed, saying that such TV shows as "Baywatch" seem to equate tans with good looks.

"You never see Pamela (Anderson) Lee saying, 'I need my sunscreen,'" Tessa remarked.

John pointed out that the modern preoccupation with tanning is a departure from earlier ages, when fair-skinned people were actually considered among the elite.

"That meant they weren't out in the fields working," he explained.

**Coming next week:
Gun control**

ON THE MOVE

Think twice when you plan to tan



When you step out into the sun, are you preoccupied with that deep, perfect tan more than with skin protection? If that's the case, a Rochester dermatologist makes a strong suggestion: Start educating yourself about skin damage.

"The younger you are, the more important it is to check your skin. Eighty percent of sun damage occurs before the age of 18," said Mark Goldgeier, M.D., who conducts a private practice in Rochester.

Because there are no immediate visible effects, Goldgeier said, many teens and young adults mistakenly believe they're immune from skin damage. At those ages, he said, the problem only shows up "microscopically."

However, beginning by your late 20s, Goldgeier warned, blotches and wrinkling on the skin will become more apparent - and the likelihood of skin cancer is higher as well.

"All that is because of sun exposure. If you don't use sun protection, you will have aging of the skin," Goldgeier said.

Beginning in the 1980s, he said, the medical field became increasingly aware of these dangers and began developing more effective forms of sunscreen lotions and creams to protect against the sun's rays. Goldgeier recommended sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) between 15 and 30 for anyone who plans to be in the sun for at least a couple of hours.

"An SPF of 30 gives you 97 percent protection," Goldgeier said.

Although tanning beds enable people to tan without receiving sun exposure, Goldgeier said that the beds - even when used for limited time periods - are not healthy.

"Tanning beds are harmful, period," said Goldgeier, who explained that beds contain more concentrated ultraviolet rays than the sun. However, Goldgeier recognizes that people who want a tan are going to find a way to get one, regardless of their approach.

"If someone wants a tan, at all costs, then go buy a sunless tanning cream," he suggested.



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