

# Sunlight

When we think “sunshine” we often think of a luxury SUN-cruise on the Caribbean, with stops at enchanting island retreats like Jamaica or Barbados, or we think CANCER. Why these extremes? In reality, most people can get plenty of sunshine in their own backyards! Ten or 15 minutes in noontime summer sun leads to the production of 10,000 IU (International Units) of Vitamin D, which has proven to decrease the risk for many cancers.

The myth is busted! Sunshine protects against a very deadly form of skin cancer called melanoma. A new study published in the March 2011 *European Journal of Cancer* discovered that those people who spent four to five hours in the sun each day over weekends were less likely to develop melanoma than those who did not. This is exciting for those who love the sun. (A word of caution here: those who burn easily were at higher risk regardless of the amount of time spent in the sun. So avoid sunburn.) Another piece of good news for sun lovers is that women with high sun exposure had half the risk of developing advanced breast cancer. Also, reduced risk of other cancers by sunshine include prostate, colon, lung, ovary, bladder, uterus, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, kidney, multiple myeloma, and non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma.

## **Sunlight Increases Immunity**

Immunity is increased by exposure to sunlight and your body's resistance to infection is strengthened. White blood cells are increased. Antibodies are increased too. These effects can last up to three weeks. Even 10 minutes of sun twice a week can greatly reduce the incidence of colds.

## **Sunlight Strengthens Bones**

Bones are strengthened by sunlight. It allows the body to make Vitamin D, which helps calcium absorption from the intestines and calcium deposit in building healthy bones. Sunlight prevents rickets and helps prevent and reverse osteoporosis. There is also a connection with lowered incidence of dental cavities.

## **Sunlight Promotes Sense of Well-being**

Sense of well-being is promoted by sunlight and the mood is elevated. Daily exposure to natural sunlight will boost melatonin output, which also improves sleep. For most people, sunlight is an important therapy, especially if combined with exercise, in preventing and treating acute and chronic depression. Sunlight helps produce serotonin to lift the mood.

## **Other Benefits of Sunlight**

Other benefits of sunshine include alleviating pain from swollen arthritic joints and even relieving some symptoms of pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS). It also helps ward off heart disease, hypertension, and autoimmune diseases like Crohn's, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Juvenile Diabetes, MS, as well as obesity.

*Remember – it's not all that bad. Enjoy the sun moderately and it will increase your vitality and good health.*

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