

Top health tips your dermatologist wants you to know

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Skin plays numerous irreplaceable roles in protecting and regulating the body. And it takes a beating, quite literally, every day. But with some well-informed care and feeding, it can help us live long and happy lives.

Here is a list from the AMA's What Doctors Want Patients to Know™ series—which provides physicians with a platform to share what they want patients to understand about today's health care headlines—on some important health tips that dermatologists want their patients to know.

1 Avoiding skin cancer begins with knowing it can happen to anyone

Skin cancer can take many forms, but the most common are basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma. The typical culprit behind these skin cancers is too much exposure to ultraviolet rays, either from the sun or from artificial sources like tanning beds.

But they can occur for other reasons too. That is why it is important to understand your risk and know what steps to take to prevent skin cancer. Among the dermatologists offering further insights was [Klint Peebles, MD](#), who practices in Washington and suburban Maryland at Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group, a member of the [AMA Health System Program](#).

2 Not all sunscreens are created equal

Wearing sunscreen is one of the easiest ways to protect your skin's appearance and health at any age. But more often than not, people are not wearing—or reapplying—sunscreen properly. Knowing what type to buy and how to properly apply sunscreen are key to preventing skin cancer, which is often caused by too much exposure to ultraviolet rays from the sun or artificial sources such as tanning beds.

Learn what patients should know about wearing sunscreen. At the top of the list: Look for a broad-spectrum variety with a sun-protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher.

3 The daily do's and don'ts of maintaining healthy skin

Skin is the body's largest organ, so it is important to take care of it. That's because when skin is healthy, its layers work hard to protect us. But when it is not, the skin's ability to work as a protective barrier is impaired. Plus, protecting us from bacteria, viruses, pollution, chemical substances and harmful ultraviolet rays is only one of its functions.

Skin also regulates body temperature, maintains fluid balance, controls moisture loss, acts as a barrier and shock absorber and recognizes pain sensations. Knowing how to achieve healthy skin from head to toe can help support it in maintaining its many roles.

4 Sort myths from misconceptions on acne treatment

Acne is a skin condition that affects millions of people worldwide and has long been a source of frustration and self-consciousness. The good news is there are acne treatments provided by physicians that can offer new hope to patients seeking clear and radiant skin.

Whether you are a teenager navigating the challenges of adolescence or an adult grappling with stubborn breakouts, knowing what to do to improve acne is key. Learn what patients need to know about acne treatment.

5 Make summer the time to double down on skin safety

As people flock to beaches and participate in other outdoor activities, it is important for them to take care of their skin because too much sun exposure can have detrimental effects, such as sunburn, skin aging, eye damage and skin cancer.

Applying sunscreen is just the start of it—a comprehensive approach also includes wearing protective clothing and seeking supportive care for sunburns. Among the dermatologists weighing in was William L. Waller III, MD, a dermatologist at Hattiesburg Clinic Dermatology—South. Hattiesburg Clinic also is a member of the [AMA Health System Program](#).

6 Managing psoriasis requires a multipronged approach

Living with psoriasis can be incredibly frustrating and challenging. That's because dealing with itchy, scaly skin can hinder daily activities, affect emotional well-being and diminish overall quality of life. The encouraging news is that there are strategies to ease the challenges of living with psoriasis.

Knowing what to keep in mind can help patients gain better control over their symptoms and improve their overall well-being. Two dermatologists took time to discuss what patients need to know about psoriasis. Among them: Working with a dermatologist can unlock access to vital therapies.

7 Prior authorization can delay necessary dermatologic care

When patients go to the pharmacy to fill a prescription, they are often told that their insurance company won't pay for the medication unless a physician

obtains approval. Patients may wait days, weeks or even months for a necessary test or medical procedure to be scheduled because physicians need to first obtain similar authorization from an insurer.

This tactic, used by insurance companies to control costs, is called prior authorization. Jack Resneck Jr., MD, a dermatologist and 2022–2023 AMA president, laid out what patients need to know about prior authorization and the pivotal role they can play in fixing it.