

# Meet Our Experts: Skin



### **What is Meet Our Experts?**

Meet Our Experts events are free events for the public, offering people the chance to talk to and learn from our qualified and highly-trained experts in health and wellbeing.

These events are part of Nuffield Health's commitment to supporting you to be as fit and healthy as you can be. By connecting our members and the wider community to our unique breadth of health and wellbeing experts, we aim to inform, educate and support you on a wide range of overall health and wellbeing topics.

### **Join us as we look at all things skin.**

Whether you'd like to learn more about the largest organ in your body or have a specific skin concern, we can provide the information you need to give your skin the care it deserves.

**Be sure to tune into our skin event to learn more about your skin and how to look after it.**

**Meet Our Experts:  
Learn about – skin**

# Fast tips for healthy glowing skin

Our skin is so important for our health and our confidence, and looking after it can feel like a struggle but a few quick changes of routine can make all the difference.

## Use sun lotion properly

One of the biggest threats to skin health is the sun. While a daily dose of sun is essential for both our mental wellbeing and for the synthesis of vitamin D, we only need 15 minutes of sunlight a day. Spending any more time in the sun without adequate protection can have serious consequences, as UVA and UVB rays attack our skin. This causes premature ageing, burns and damage to the skin's DNA, which can lead to cancer.

Some sun lotions only protect you from UVB rays, but UVA rays are also very damaging. So, look for a UVA rating of three stars or more and a UVB sun protection factor of 30 to 50. Apply sun lotion every hour and after sweating or swimming.

## Drink plenty of water

Around 60 percent of our body is water. It's important to keep ourselves topped up regularly, to ensure everything functions efficiently. This includes our immune system, which is key for skin health. Try to drink at least eight glasses a day, or more if you're being especially active.





### **Stop smoking and drinking alcohol**

Smoking is a leading cause of premature skin ageing. It constricts the blood vessels, reducing the supply of blood, oxygen and nutrients to the skin, and breaks down the collagen that keeps our skin looking firm. Alcohol expands the blood vessels, causing redness that can become permanent for heavy drinkers. Drinking excessively also enlarges pores, which can leave the skin more susceptible to infection and acne.

### **Wash around once a day**

It's important to clean your skin to get rid of bacteria that can cause infections and odour. However, cleaning too often can remove the protective oils that prevent your skin from drying out – leaving it vulnerable to infections. Washing once or twice a day is an adequate cleansing routine.

### **Use soap substitutes**

Harsh detergents in soap can dry out your skin, this can lead to constricted blood vessels which cannot adequately supply nutrients to the skin cells – prolonging the skin's healing process. Using water on its own, or anti-bacterial gels, can help keep your skin hydrated and better protected from infections and inflammation.

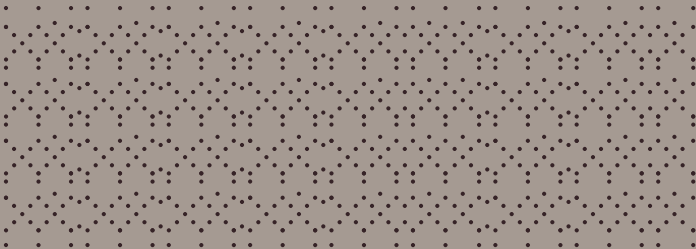
### **Use natural moisturisers**

The chemicals used in some moisturisers can cause an allergic reaction to those with sensitive skin. Natural substitutes such as coconut oil and aloe vera will keep your skin hydrated and are less likely to cause a reaction.



# The A-G guide to checking your moles

It's important to be able to tell the difference between a cancerous mole and a non-cancerous one, particularly if you have a lot of moles or freckles. Nuffield Health GP and mole expert Unnati Desai has provided a simple guide to identify the signs. If a mole exhibits any of these signs, visit your doctor or a dermatologist to get it checked.





### **A – Asymmetry**

Normal moles or freckles are completely symmetrical. If you were to draw a line through a normal spot, you would have two symmetrical halves. In cases of skin cancer, spots don't look the same on both sides.

### **B – Border**

A mole or spot with blurry and/or jagged edges.

### **C – Colour**

A mole of more than one hue is suspicious and needs to be evaluated by a doctor. Normal moles are usually one colour (this can include lightening or darkening of the mole). Melanoma cells usually continue to produce melanin, which accounts for the cancers appearing in mixed shades of tan, brown and black.

### **D – Diameter**

If a mole is larger than a pencil eraser (about 1/4 inch or 6mm) it needs to be examined by a doctor. This includes areas that do not have any other abnormalities (colour, border, asymmetry). But, don't be fooled by size alone, a troublesome mole can be smaller.

### **E – Elevation/Evolving**

Elevation means the mole is raised above the surface and has an uneven surface. Evolving means changing in size, shape and colour.

### **F – Changes from firm to palpation**

A mole that changes from a firm to a softer, spongier consistency may need to be evaluated by a doctor.

### **G – Growing progressively over 1 month**

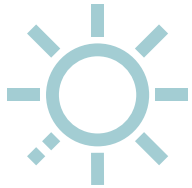
A mole should remain a consistent size. If your mole continues to grow over more than a month, speak to your doctor.



# Staying protected in the sun

Spending time in the sun is great for mental wellbeing, but it's essential to respect the sun's power and protect your skin properly.

**Here's what you need to know:**





### **Use lotion that protects from both UVA and UVB**

Ultraviolet radiation (UV) damages the skin's cellular DNA, which can cause both short and long-term damage. UVA and UVB are two kinds of UV ray that affect us on the Earth's surface. Both can damage our skin and can cause cancer. Many lotions only protect you from UVB radiation, and SPF (skin protection factor) is only a measure of how well the lotion will protect you from UVB light. To make sure you are protected from both UVA and UVB look out for a star rating on the bottle, which is a measure of UVA protection. Three to five stars will protect you sufficiently. Look for the term 'broad spectrum', this means the lotion protects both UVA and UVB.

### **Apply top to toe**

Sun damage can affect all skin, so make sure you use adequate lotion protection on all exposed areas. Put it on before you get dressed in the morning so that you don't miss anything. Don't forget the tops of your ears, back of your hands, and your hair parting if you have one.

### **Reapply regularly**

All sun cream lotions can rub off. Even if they claim to be waterproof, most won't resist the rubbing from your towel when you dry yourself. Remember to reapply after every dip in the water, after playing sports or sweating, and at a minimum every two hours. Delicate features like noses, brows, ears, and cheek bones may need more regular application to ensure you stay protected.

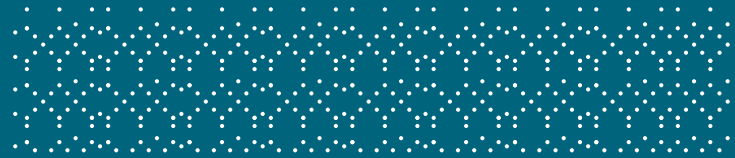
### **Use a minimum of factor 30**

The higher the factor, the greater the protection from UVB rays – as long as you follow the above advice. It may be tempting to use a lower factor to achieve a tan, but in reality this will only damage your skin and could lead to burning. If your skin hasn't seen the sun in a while it's especially important that you use a high factor (40 to 50), which can be reduced to 30 after a week.

Children should always wear factor 50 as their skin is much more delicate than an adult's, and more vulnerable to burning. A UVA protection factor of three to five stars will provide adequate protection from UVA rays.

### **Wear sun lotion even if you cover up**

Many people think they don't have to wear sun lotion if they are covered up in clothes. In fact, many fabrics will not protect you from the sun's rays. UPF is a rating of sun protection for clothing and other fabrics. Lighter fabrics, which are more popular in sunny months typically have a lower UPF rating, and are less protective than heavier fabrics. So it's important that you apply sun lotion even if you cover up.



# How to make your own vitamin D face mask

Revitalise your skin with this simple vitamin D recipe from Nutritional Therapist **Tracey Strudwick**.

Often called the 'sunshine vitamin', vitamin D plays an integral role in skin protection and rejuvenation. In its active form calcitriol, vitamin D contributes to skin cell growth, repair, and metabolism. It enhances the skin's immune system and helps to destroy free radicals that can cause premature ageing. Vitamin D supplements have also been found to improve conditions such as acne and psoriasis.

Our bodies produce vitamin D on their own through sun exposure. Over time, however, the sun can damage this delicate organ, leading to wrinkles, sunspots, and an increased risk of skin cancer.

When sun exposure is limited, such as in the winter months, it's important to top-up levels of vitamin D through your diet and supplements. Applying vitamin D topically can also help maintain good skin health and effectively improve some skin conditions.



#### Ingredients:

- ♦ 1 egg yolk
- ♦ 2 tablespoons plain yoghurt
- ♦ 2 tablespoons ground oats

#### Instructions:

Mix all ingredients together.  
Apply the mixture to your face  
and rinse with lukewarm water  
after 15 minutes.

#### Benefits

This vitamin D face mask will leave your skin feeling soft and cleansed. The egg yolk and yoghurt are rich-sources of vitamin D, as well as having anti-inflammatory properties that will help to calm down redness, while the oats will act as a mild exfoliator.

# Building a healthier nation

Driven by our purpose to build a healthier nation, our experts have been working together for more than 60 years to make the nation fitter, healthier, happier and stronger.

Nuffield Health provides health and wellbeing for every part of you. We believe the best healthcare should help prevent illness by looking after your mind and body. That's why our connected health and wellbeing offering spans physical and mental health – from personal training, health assessments, GP services and physiotherapy, to providing mental health support or hospital care and treatment.

We work together as a team to help you achieve your health and wellbeing ambitions. We champion free health and wellbeing programmes in your communities by giving people the tools they need to live a healthy life. These programmes help people understand and improve their own health, from those living with joint pain, to helping rehabilitate people experiencing the long-term effects of COVID-19.



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