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Are You Making These Common Mistakes After a Bad Sunburn



Unless you have been living under a rock, you know the importance of SPF and re-applying it. There are times when, despite your best efforts, you still manage to get burned. Perhaps you were careless, and after too many margaritas forgot to re-apply your sunblock. Now, you are literally burned by your day of fun in the sun. Before you do anything to put yourself out of your stinging, burning agony, read these tips so you know what not to do to soothe a sunburn. **Dr. Sheel Desai Solomon** is a board-certified Raleigh-Durham North Carolina Dermatologist and founder and owner of Preston Dermatology. Here is her list of things to avoid after a bad sunburn.

Wearing Cologne

Some cologne may contain ingredients that make you more prone to burning. "Oil of bergamot is especially notorious for this," explains Dr. Solomon "and can cause a severe, blistering reaction when it's on your skin and exposed to the sun." It's become rarer in the past few years since many fragrance companies started stripping the ingredient from their products. Other perfume ingredients and essential oils, like rosemary and lavender oils, can make your skin more sensitive to the rays, too, Dr. Solomon adds. To play it safe, avoid spraying any scents onto your skin before you go outside.

Medications

Taking an anti-inflammatory medication, like acetaminophen or ibuprofen, can help soothe your skin once you're sunburned. However, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), like ibuprofen and naproxen, can also leave you more vulnerable to getting burned in the first place. Dr. Solomon explains, "That's because certain medications contain photosensitizing agents. Those molecules will absorb the sun's UV rays and release them back into your skin, which damages and kills skin cells."

Exfoliating

While scrubbing dead skin off your body helps to you then the skin, it's one of the worst things you can do on a sunburn. When your skin is burnt from the sun, exfoliating only exposes the damaged layer of skin, even more, causing pain and further irritation, explains Dr. Solomon. Instead, use a gentle moisturizer or mask to treat damaged skin.

Don't Use Coconut Oil or Butter

You may have heard before that lathering butter or coconut oil will soothe your burn, but it's a myth. The skin is hot and needs to cool down, applying a fat-based product onto your skin will not only clog the pores and stop the healing process, but it might also aggravate inflammation. "Coconut oil and butter are great for moisturizing the skin in other instances," says Dr. Solomon, "but when it comes to a burn, you should wait until the skin cools to use it."

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