

Sunlight

You probably recognize the importance of the sun to life on earth. You know it provides heat, light and food. What can sunlight do for your personal health?

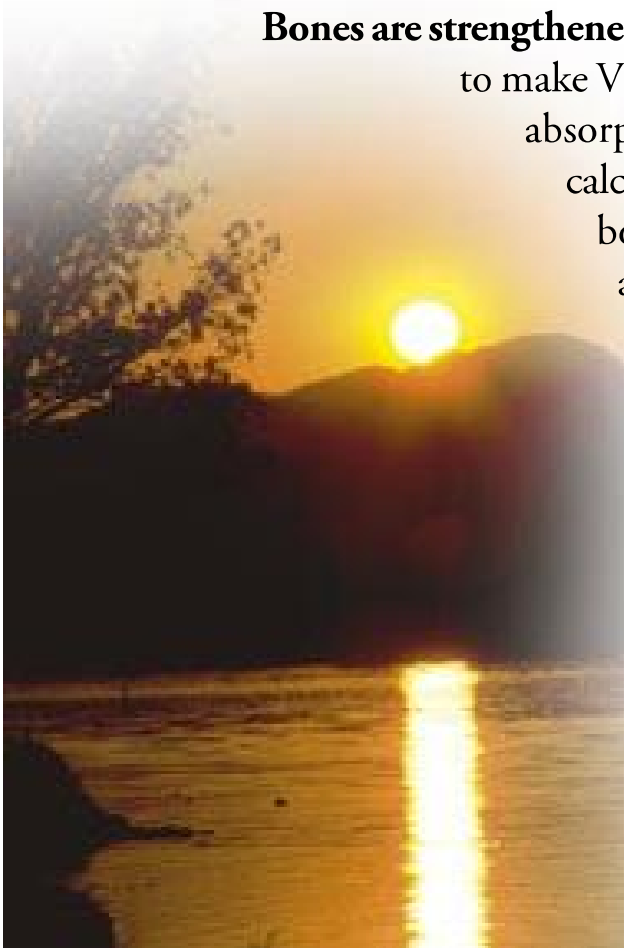
Sunlight kills germs. That is why it is important to sun and air out the blankets, pillows and other items that are not washed often. Open up the windows of your house as much as possible. This will allow the sunlight to kill bacteria in your home as well and will help prevent mould.

Immunity is increased by exposure to sunlight, and your body's resistance to infection is strengthened. White blood cells are increased, especially the protective lymphocytes. Antibodies are increased too. These effects can last up to three weeks. Even ten minutes of sun twice a week can greatly reduce the incidence of colds. A moderately tanned skin withstands infections better too.

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.

Red blood cells function better after sun exposure. They have increased ability to carry and deliver oxygen to the body's cells. This will increase your energy and endurance and help prevent many diseases.

Cholesterol is moderately



lowered by sunlight exposure. The cholesterol is changed to Vitamin D in the skin in the presence of unfiltered sunlight.

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. Remember to try to catch any possible ray of sunshine during winter's cold and gloomy months.



Healing properties are found in sunlight. Skin wounds heal much better with short periods of sun exposure daily. Sunlight also helps to alleviate pain from swollen arthritic joints and even relieves some symptoms of pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS).

Cancer of the breast, colon and prostate are less likely in people getting good exposure to sunshine.

WARNING

Small amounts of sunlight are wonderful. Large amounts are dangerous! Limit your exposure to the sun. A goal of up to 30 minutes a day is realistic for most people. Initially you may need to limit this to 5 minutes if you are fair-skinned, or 15 minutes for darker skins, with gradual increases. Remember that wet skin burns faster and ultraviolet rays of the sun can reflect off snow, sand and water, greatly increasing your exposure. Ultraviolet rays can still burn even if it is a cloudy day.

Never allow yourself to burn. Sunburn raises the risk of skin cancer. Malignant melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, kills nearly 7,000 Americans a year.

We know that sunlight can be healing or destructive, depending on how we use it – the kiss of life or the kiss of death. Enjoy the sun sparingly and it will increase your vitality and good health.