**Smart skincare tips for summer**

**Johannesburg - People say that beauty is only skin deep, and what is on the "inside" is what counts. Skincare is often mistakenly considered a mere aesthetic pursuit. The #beauty hashtag on Instagram has more than 500 million photos, but skincare is about more than just adding a youthful photo to your social media account.**

Do you know your skin is your largest organ, accounting for 10% to 15% of your body weight?

Your skin is more than a protective barrier - it reflects your internal health. Therefore, you need to pay attention to subtle skin texture and colour changes, as they give important clues about your overall health. Here are a few examples:

* Skin that appears dull or lacks elasticity might suggest deficiencies in vital nutrients or dehydration (for example, dry skin can also be a sign of an omega-3 fatty acid deficiency).
* Most of us know that our skin shows when we are sleep-deprived. Saggy, dark circles under the eyes can be a clue to fatigue.
* Our skin reflects blood flow and oxygen levels. Very pale or excessively red skin can signal circulatory or heart diseases. If your skin tone changes drastically without another apparent cause, it's essential to consult a healthcare provider to assess your cardiovascular health.
* Skin cancer is the one cancer you can see. Unlike cancers that develop inside the body, skin cancers are usually visible. That's why skin exams are vital at home and with a dermatologist.

Our skin has a positive effect on self-confidence and quality of life, and since it plays a crucial role in our health and well-being, daily skincare is essential.

**Here are our** **Skin-Smart tips for summer**

1. **Stay hydrated (inside and out!)**

In summer, our bodies lose more water through sweat. When heat and humidity rise, you need to drink more water. Hydration is vital for overall health but also for maintaining beautiful skin - your skin may appear dull and dry when dehydrated. Drinking adequate water helps flush out toxins, keeps your skin plump, and prevents it from becoming dry and flaky.

Don't forget to bring a water bottle with you. And if plain water gets boring, add in slices of cucumber, lemon, or mint leaves for a refreshing twist.

1. **Technology can help to check the UV index**

South Africa falls in the 'extremely high risk' category on the national UV index. You can check the UV index on your phone or smartwatch with any weather app. If the UV index is higher than 6, take extra precautions, like applying a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30+ and being mindful about your time in the sun.

Your shadow can help you to identify your level of UV exposure:

* If your shadow is taller than you are (in the early morning and late afternoon), your UV exposure will be lower.
* If your shadow is shorter than you are (around midday), you are exposed to higher UV radiation levels. Seek shade and protect your skin and eyes.
1. **Limit time in the sun**

The cells in your skin turn sunlight into vitamin D, which is vital for the health of your bones and immune system. However, as South Africans, we must limit our time in the sun due to an extreme UV index rating. Avoid being in direct sunlight during peak sunshine hours - between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. - and if you have no choice, apply sunscreen, and wear a broad-brimmed hat.

Don't be fooled by cloudy skies. UV damage can still occur in the shade, underwater and on overcast days. You can also get sunburned if you are in water, so be careful when you are in a pool or the ocean.

1. **Sunscreen is only one aspect of sun protection**

Exposure to UV light from the sun is responsible for 86 per cent of melanomas (skin cancer). Over the last decade, more solar UV radiation reaches the earth's surface because ozone levels are depleted, and the atmosphere loses more of its protective filter function.

The global incidence of melanoma continues to increase, and therefore you need to wear clothing and accessories that protect you from the sun, like long sleeves, long pants and high collars, clothing that either has a UPF rating or is densely woven, broad-brimmed hats and good-quality sunglasses. Cover up!

1. **Eat the rainbow**

Eating a variety of food can help ensure you get enough vitamins and antioxidants to nourish your skin. People lacking B vitamins, like those found in proteins, fruits, and dark leafy greens, are more susceptible to skin rashes. Vitamin C deficiency is often linked to fragile skin and issues with wound healing. Click [here](https://news.medshield.media/understanding-vitamins-and-minerals-as-we-grow-older) to understand more about vitamins and minerals.

Antioxidants are superheroes for your skin, especially during summer. The sun can cause unstable molecules, called free radicals, to damage cells in your skin. But antioxidant-rich foods such as berries, citrus fruits, leafy greens, and green tea can stabilise those free radicals, so they don't damage your skin cells.

1. **Stop smoking**

Smoking contributes to several skin problems, including slow wound healing and skin infections, and increases the risks for certain skin cancers. Chemicals in tobacco and vape smoke trigger the destruction of collagen and elastin, the fibres that give your skin strength and elasticity. Even being around second-hand smoke degrades the building blocks of healthy skin.

You can support your skin's health by prioritising nutrition and being sun-smart this summer. Schedule a professional skin exam if you see any warning signs. Medshield Medical Scheme provides members with comprehensive health screenings to identify potential issues early, allowing timely intervention.

*\*\* Source: American Academy of Dermatology Association and the World Health Organization research on UV radiation and skin protection.*

**FIN**

(931 words)

**EDITORS NOTES**

**FURTHER MEDIA INFORMATION AND INTERVIEW REQUESTS**

* Stone issues this release on behalf of the Medshield Medical Scheme.
* For media enquiries or interview requests, please contact Willem Eksteen, CEO of Stone or a media liaison member of the Stone team at media@stone.consulting / 011 447 0168
* Alternatively, contact Lilané Swanepoel at Medshield at 010 597 4982 / lilanes@medshield.co.za

**MORE INFORMATION ON THE 2024 MEDSHIELD BENEFIT OPTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

Benefits and Contribution amendments are subject to CMS approval.

Please refer to the 2024 Product Page on the Medshield website at <https://medshield.co.za/>. You can review the benefit adjustments and value adds and download the 2024 benefit guides

* **PremiumPlus** provides mature families and professionals with unlimited hospital cover in a hospital of their choice, with In-Hospital Medical Practitioner consultations and visits paid at 200% Medshield Private Tariff, and the freedom to manage daily healthcare expenses through a comprehensive Personal Savings Account and extended Above Threshold Cover.
* **MediBonus** provides mature families and professionals with unlimited hospital cover in a hospital of their choice, with In-Hospital Medical Practitioner consultations and visits paid at 200% Medshield Private Tariff, and the independence to manage daily healthcare expenses through a substantial Day-to-Day Limit.
* **MediSaver** is perfect for independent individuals and young professionals thinking about expanding their families. MediSaver offers unlimited hospital cover in the Compact Hospital Network, with the freedom to manage daily healthcare expenses through a generous Personal Savings Account.
* **MediPlus** provides middle to upper-income families with complete healthcare cover for major medical and daily healthcare needs. Unlimited hospital cover is provided through a choice of two hospital networks, Prime or the value-focused Compact Hospital Network. Daily healthcare expenses are covered through a generous Day-to-Day Limit. Benefits are identical in both categories, Prime and Compact, with care coordination and doctor referral mandated on MediPlus Compact.
* **MediCore** is ideal for healthy individuals looking for comprehensive hospital cover, with daily healthcare expenses self-managed. This option offers unlimited hospital cover in the Compact Hospital Network, with In-Hospital Medical Practitioner consultations and visits paid at Medshield Private Tariff 200%. Day-to-day healthcare expenses are self-funded.
* **MediValue - Prime and Compact** - is the ideal option for growing families. It offers affordable cover for major medical and daily healthcare needs. Unlimited hospital cover is provided through a choice of two hospital networks, Prime or the value-focused Compact Hospital Network. Daily healthcare expenses are covered through a sizeable Day-to-Day Limit. Benefits are identical on both options, MediValue Prime and MediValue Compact, with care coordination and doctor referral mandated on MediValue Compact.
* **MediSwift** is the ideal hospital plan for active, healthy individuals. Major medical emergency and In-Hospital treatment are covered up to R1 million per family in the Compact Hospital Network, with the added benefit of day-to-day treatment for non-professional sports injuries. As a hospital plan, MediSwift offers no Day-to-Day benefits, allowing members the freedom to self-manage their daily healthcare expenses.

**Medshield Medical Scheme - Live Assured knowing you have a Partner for Life.**

**ABOUT MEDSHIELD MEDICAL SCHEME**

* Medshield is a healthcare fund where all members contribute towards the fund monthly to cater for medical cover should the need arise.
* Medshield has been in operation since 1968, making us one of the most experienced, knowledgeable, and reliable medical schemes in South Africa. Our extensive experience in the healthcare sector guides our understanding of our members' needs. Our excellent cover and benefits combined with the best quality systems and services have resulted in our exceptional size and strength.
* Each of our options offers affordably priced benefits. We continuously review and improve the range of benefits in each option to bring you what you need.
* Our impeccable reputation of prompt payments to hospitals, doctors, pharmacies and other medical caregivers guarantees approval from service providers when you present your Medshield membership card.
* Our extensive partner networks place us in the perfect position to offer exceptionally competitive rates to our members.
* Medshield is well-represented throughout all nine provinces and provides seamless access to service providers in your area. Our geographical spread provides convenience if it becomes necessary for you to have a personal discussion with one of our experienced consultants. We also have a streamlined online claim submission system and immediate contact centre assistance, making it easier to manage your membership and claims from the convenience of your home or office.
* Our extensive range of additional benefits and services is another distinguishing factor. Our benefits and services have been designed to give members additional support when they need it most, for instance, in an emergency or when suffering from a chronic or life-threatening condition.
* Compared with other medical schemes, our trustworthiness, impeccable history, and exceptional service guarantee that we come out tops!