

## Summer Skin Concerns

With summer almost “officially” here, I thought it would be useful to review the 3 most common summer skin concerns that I see marching into our clinic around this time of year. Along with the wonderful weather, summer allows us to spend extra hours enjoying the great and wild outdoors. This oftentimes include prolonged hours at the golf course, tending to the wonderful flowering trees and bushes in the yard, or lounging in the boat at the lake staring at the sky. We can get easily get carried away in our activities that we do not realize when we forget to protect our skin sufficiently. So hopefully the following info will help us spend most of our sunny days doing what we love, and not wasting it away at the doctor’s office.

Let’s start with the most important summer rash of all that can increase our risk in developing skin cancers such as melanoma. If that does not catch your attention, maybe this following line will. This rash may cause permanent brown spots and wrinkles on our skin and cause premature aging of our pretty faces. This is the ultimate summer rash that invites a lecture from the dermatologist when seen in clinic: the **SUNBURN**. The sunburn is made even worse when I see this in the office followed by a statement such as: “But doc, that’s why I need to get into the tanning bed before my vacations... for my base tan. It protects me from burning and from skin cancer.” This tanning myth cannot be further from the truth. In fact, indoor use of tanning beds increases melanoma risk by up to 74 percent.



### **Advice:**

Apply at least an SPF30 sunscreen (greater than SPF30 is even better) 30 minutes prior to going outdoors.

Make sure you pick a sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB (most sunscreens nowadays do), and do not forget to reapply every 2 to 3 hours especially when you plan to be outside for a prolonged amount of time.

If a sunburn does occur, you can apply over-the-counter hydrocortisone gels and aloe gels for relief while allowing your skin to heal. Should severe blistering occur or pain persist despite these over-the-counter regimens, you may need to visit the clinic for a stronger cortisone prescription to stop the inflammation.

If reapplication of your sunscreen is not an option due to forgetfulness or the nature of your activities (perhaps being in water all the time), you can opt for sun protective clothing such as hats and long sleeved shirts and pants.

*(Continued on page 2)*

Visit [www.coolibar.com](http://www.coolibar.com) to explore your options of fashionable sun protective outfits on land and in water. If you truly need some color on your skin for cosmetic reasons, please consider getting a spray tan or use over-the-counter self-tanners. TanTowels are readily available at your local Sephora and other retail stores, and are quite popular due to their practical nature of application.

Your dermatologist may recommend even taking oral agents such as Heliocare, available at your local Walgreens. Heliocare is an oral antioxidant containing extracts of *Polypodium leucotomos*, a tropical fern rich in antioxidant compounds such as caffeic acid and ferulic acid. Clinical studies have shown that taking the antioxidant can help increase our protection to sunburns, close to an SPF of 3. This is a good supplement to be used in conjunction with a topical sunscreen, but is by no means a substitute for your topical sunscreen.

Let's talk about the second summer skin rash that is popular among those who like to be active in the outdoors. Those who love to hike, camp, and spend tireless hours gardening in the backyard will most likely be familiar with the **POISON IVY RASH**. This is one of the many plant-based dermatitides that is known to cause hives, redness, blisters, and swelling of the skin. The rash most commonly occurs after exposure by contact (touch), but can also be triggered by airborne particles (if poison ivy is burned). Other culprits for plant rashes outside the three-leafed-poison ivy include poison oak, poison sumac, as well as flowers such as the grocery store favorite *Alstromeria*, daffodils, and chrysanthemums.

#### **Advice:**

Be vigilant and aware of your surroundings when amongst plants, particularly when camping or in the backyard. Get to know what poison ivy and poison oak look like. "Leaves of three, let it be!"

In the case of contact, wash the area thoroughly with soap and water. Be aware of animals with long haired furs that can transfer the allergens from outside in the yard to inside your home as they brush by these plants and then snuggle against their owners. You can treat the inflamed skin from plant rashes with over the counter hydrocortisone creams in combination with oral antihistamines such as Zyrtec, Claritin, Benadryl or Allegra to stop the itching and redness. In the case of facial involvement or severe blistering, you would need to see your dermatologist for stronger prescriptions. Sometimes an oral steroid course such as prednisone may be needed and slowly tapered over time.

Last but not least, the combination of being active and warm summer days oftentimes leads to unfortunate rashes that develop in our sweaty skinfolds. Men have witnessed this annoyance occurring in their armpits and groins, while women, especially those with large size breasts are burdened by this entity known to dermatologists as intertrigo -one of my patients called it "boobsweat". Human sweat is mostly water, and contains traces of salt and other electrolytes. During average intensity exercise, sweat losses can average up to 2 litres of water/hour, all of which ends up running down the skin and trapped in clothing or skin folds. In addition to ongoing friction during activities and hot temperature, we also carry yeast that normally resides peacefully on our intact skin. However when you take all these factors together, we are left with a lot of skin breakdown, which may end up causing disease. This disease is called intertrigo. Skin affected by intertrigo is inflamed, reddened and uncomfortable. It may become moist and macerated, leading to fissuring (cracks) and peeling.

*(Continued on page 3)*

**Advice:**

To lower your chance of being affected by intertrigo, we can wash the skin folds with antibacterial soap, such as Dial or Cetaphil antibacterial soap. This decreases skin germs and the possibility of infection leading to inflamed intertrigo. If you have sensitive skin, I prefer brands such as Cetaphil, over Dial, and you can focus on applying the soap to the sweaty parts of your body as otherwise it may be too drying.

Blow dry your skin folds (on the cool air setting of course!) after toweling off when drying from a shower or bath. This way you do not trap excess moisture in the skin folds. Wearing loose and light breathable clothing, like cotton and linen will prevent too much trapped moisture on the skin as well.

Apply over the counter anti-yeast powder, such as Zeasorb AF, to dry skin folds. Avoid corn-starch based powders, because starch is essentially a sugar perfect for yeast growth. Over the counter antifungal creams and hydrocortisone creams can help in providing relief. If the treated areas do not respond within 1-2 weeks, you may need to see your dermatologist to obtain prescription medications.

Wishing you a sunburn-free and rash-free summer!

**Dr. Kartono**



## Liberty Festival

Please come visit our booth at the Liberty Fest during **June 16th-18th**. We will have some information, giveaways, prizes and an opportunity to speak to a medical assistant or a provider with some basic questions.

The Liberty Fest is action-packed fun-filled days that the whole family will enjoy in beautiful Heritage Park, located behind the Canton Administration Building and the Canton Public Library, just west of Canton Center Road between Cherry Hill and Summit Parkway. Our booth will be located near the pond.

As always, entry into the festival grounds is free. Canton's largest community celebration continues its tradition of offering plenty of fabulous fun for all ages, so don't miss this year's festivities!

We are excited to be a part of this and looking forward to seeing you there.

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## Parking Lot

We wanted to extend our apologies regarding the parking situation. We share the parking lot with other medical facilities and we understand at times there are minimal to no spots available and may cause delays. We wanted to ensure you that we are working on a solution and to please allow some extra time to arrive for your appointment. We appreciate your cooperation and patience during this time.

*(Continued on page 4)*

# Welcome New Providers

**Ann LaFond, M.D** is a board certified dermatologist and has been practicing for over 30 years. She has years of experience diagnosing, treating and preventing skin problems and diseases. Her experience entails of general, cosmetic and surgical dermatology and excels in the subspecialties of skin cancer, acne, psoriasis, and allergic reactions. Dr. LaFond also teaches Residents at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital and is involved in the community. We welcome her to our team and wish her the best of luck.

**Kimberly Simons, M.S., P.A-C** is a board certified physician assistant. Kimberly received her Bachelors degree from Central Michigan University in 2006. She completed her Master of Science degree in Physician Assistant Studies at University of Toledo in 2015. Prior to becoming a Physician Assistant, Kimberly worked for six years as a Medical Assistant at Dermatology Specialists and is very familiar with the medical, surgical and cosmetics aspects of dermatology. We are excited she joined our team and wish her the best of luck.

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- Laser Therapy
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- Removal of Skin Cancer, Warts and Scars
- Phototherapy
- Eczema
- Psoriasis
- Vitiligo

### Hamzavi Dermatology Fort Gratiot

2950 Keewahdin Rd. | Fort Gratiot, MI 48059  
(810) 455-1600

S. L. Husain Hamzavi, M.D.  
Fasahat Hamzavi, M.D.  
Iltefat Hamzavi, M.D.  
Meredith Price, M.D.  
Jennifer Marlin P.A.-C  
Ashley Carriveau, P.A.-C.  
Jessica McLeod, M.S.N., FNP-BC.

### Dermatology Specialists of Shelby

50505 Schoenherr Rd., Suite 325  
Shelby Township, MI 48315 | (586) 580-1001

Ali A. Berry, M.D.  
Matteo C. LoPiccolo, M.D.  
Judy Fontana, M.D.  
Andrea Rosik, M.S., P.A.-C.

### Hamzavi Dermatology Clinton Twp.

43151 Dalcoma, Suite 1 | Clinton Township, MI 48038  
(586) 286-8720

S. L. Husain Hamzavi, M.D.  
Meredith Price, M.D.  
Jennifer Rivard, M.D.  
Nada Macaron, M.D.  
Jessica McLeod, M.S.N., FNP-BC.

### Dermatology Specialists of Brighton

2305 Genoa Business Park Dr., Suite 180  
Brighton, MI 48114 | (810) 355-4300

Andrea Schrieber, M.D.  
Francisca Kartono, D.O.  
Matteo C. LoPiccolo, M.D.  
Jennifer Rivard, M.D.  
Jennifer M. Reiss, M.S., P.A.-C.

### Dermatology Specialists of Canton

285 Lilley Rd. | Canton, MI 48187 | (734) 495-1506

Ali A. Berry, M.D.  
Iltefat Hamzavi, M.D.  
Andrea Schrieber, M.D.  
Francisca Kartono, D.O.  
Marsha Henderson, M.D.  
Matteo C. LoPiccolo, M.D.  
Evelyn Sommariva, P.A.-C.  
Ann LaFond, M.D  
Kimberly Simons, M.S., P.A.-C.

### Hamzavi Canton Dermatology

8584 N Canton Center Rd. | Canton, MI 48187  
(734) 455-8180

David Blum, M.D  
Marsha Henderson, M.D