



Sunscreens Fail to Protect Against Harmful UVA Rays

Life Extension has long warned its members that commercial sunscreens provide only limited protection against potentially lethal ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

Now two of the nation's foremost consumer law firms have filed coordinated, class-action lawsuits in California Superior Court in Los Angeles, charging that sunscreens by leading makers such as Coppertone, Banana Boat, and Hawaiian Tropic do not protect against harmful solar radiation and create a false sense of security that actually endangers sunscreen users.*

The lawsuits allege systematic fraud, false advertising, and persistently misleading claims that exaggerate the ability of sunscreens to protect against the sun and reduce the risk of cancer and other skin ailments.

As Life Extension recently warned (see "The Sunscreen Paradox," *Life Extension*, June 2006), the FDA's flawed sun protection factor (SPF) rating system designates protection against UVB rays but not UVA rays.

According to the complaint, "UVB rays have been shown to cause [sunburn], premature aging of the skin, and the development of skin cancer . . . UVA rays are also

harmful and have been shown to damage the DNA in skin cells, contribute to premature aging of the skin, and cause the development of certain forms of skin cancer." The complaint notes that "existing research indicates that the level of protection provided against UVA rays by Defendants' sun protection products, particularly those with high SPF designations, is significantly less than the protection provided against the burning effects of UVB rays."

The complaint goes on to state that consumers have purchased sunscreen products "under the false impression that they are receiving protection from all of the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays" and that the "health costs to . . . the general public as a result of this deceptive conduct have been staggering."

According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, more than 1.5 million skin cancer cases are diagnosed annually in the US—more than breast, prostate, lung, and colon cancer combined. More than 8,000 Americans die each year from skin cancer.

The lawsuits seek an injunction on claims made by sunscreen makers on their product labels, websites, and advertising, as well as compensation for consumers and other remedies, including an industry-financed public education program on sun protection.

—Matt Sizing

Reference

* Available at: http://www.lerachlaw.com/cases/sunscreen/amended_complaint.pdf. Accessed April 20, 2006.

VITAMINS C AND E, IBUPROFEN MAY PREVENT ALZHEIMER'S

Daily intake of vitamins C and E along with ibuprofen significantly lowers the risk of developing Alzheimer's in patients at high risk for the disease, according to researchers at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.*

This combination particularly benefits people with a certain variant of the gene for apolipoprotein (APOE-4), which is a risk factor for Alzheimer's.

Using a longitudinal study design, Dr. Majid Fatuhi and his research team followed nearly 5,000 elderly residents of Cache County, Utah, for eight years. The scientists assessed the participants' consumption of vitamin C, vitamin E, and ibuprofen, and identified 127 participants who regularly used all three agents. This group showed significantly less decline in their scores on mental performance tests.

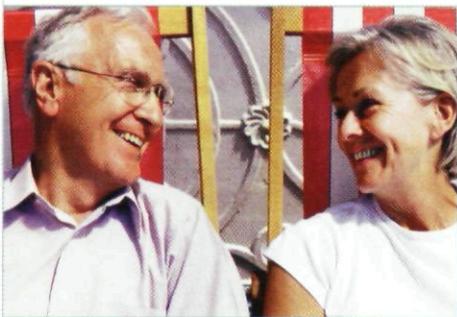
Study participants carrying the APOE-4 genetic variant demonstrated the greatest benefits from the vitamin C, vitamin E, and ibuprofen combination. According to the researchers, this subset of individuals in their late sixties and seventies showed no decline in cognitive function over the eight-year study period. By contrast, those who took just one of these agents saw their memory deteriorate over the study period.

Dr. Fatuhi noted that for people at low risk for Alzheimer's, taking vitamins C and E can reduce the risk of contracting the disease. For those at high risk of developing Alzheimer's—as determined by family history or early memory loss—the combination of vitamin C, vitamin E, and ibuprofen may be a more powerful risk-reduction strategy. Vitamins C and E may help people avert Alzheimer's by mitigating inflammation, while ibuprofen may act by reducing the amount of damaging amyloid beta protein in the brain.

—Elizabeth Wagner, ND

Reference

* Available at: <http://go.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=healthNews&storyID=11789992>. Accessed April 27, 2006.



Copyright of Life Extension is the property of Life Extension Foundation and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.