

# PRACTICAL Dermatology

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Practical Dermatology (ISSN 1547-7290) is published monthly by Avondale Medical Publications, LLC, 630 West Germantown Pike, Suite 123, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462. Printed at R.R. Donnelley Heartland Division, Spencer, IA. Copyright 2007, Avondale Medical Publications, LLC. Subscriptions are \$125.00 per year.

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A radio commentator far more insightful than I recently recited a litany of reasons not to embrace this year's early start of daylight savings time. Among her arguments against adding an "extra hour of sunlight" was the fact that dermatologists keep telling patients that spending time in the sun is unhealthy; An extra hour of daylight only means an extra hour of unhealthy exposure.

For dermatologists, who sometimes seem convinced that *no one* is heeding the sun safety message, the comment is a welcome reminder that at least *someone* is getting the point. Studies show that young people especially may be slow in adopting sun safety strategies, but it is essential that dermatologists not grow disheartened. After all, there is room for optimism. For our feature article on p. 48, Associate Editor Ted Pigeon spoke with specialists about the status of sun protection. While sunscreens today may not be ideal, the fact is that current formulations surpass many of the products available just a decade ago. Plus, numerous avenues of research hold promise for more effective and more patient-friendly sun protection strategies to emerge in the near future.

There's also been a surge in development of sunscreens formulated specifically for children, and, as Vicky Barrio, MD describes in this month's Pediatric Management column, there *are* effective ways to deliver the sun safety message to children and teens. Theoretically, if patients develop good sun protection habits early on, they will carry those habits with them through life.

Dermatologists face plenty of challenges in their efforts to preach sun safety. A "glowing tan" is still generally considered fashionable, some vitamin D proponents speculate wildly about the need for significant sun exposure, and the tanning industry is using everything from low rates to sweepstakes to draw customers in. But dermatologists have one thing on their side: scientific facts. Add effective, patient-friendly topical sun protection, and the specialty has an equation for success. ☐

*Paul Winnington*

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