



June 7, 2010 – Grand Rapids, MI

## Summer Sun

Even here in Michigan, the temperature is warm, the days are long, and summertime is definitely here. Along with it are some risks we don't face at other times of the year. This week I'm going to cover some of the issues about being outside, and we might as well start with your skin. That means sunblock. I've talked about how sunblock prevents your skin from making vitamin D, but if you're going to be outside for hours at a time, you need to protect your skin with a product that has at least a skin protection factor (SPF) of 15—more is better, up to a point.

Sure, you're trying to reduce your risk of skin cancer. But that's not the only thing. Too much sun leaves your skin with the texture of a football and probably just as dark. You really want to take that into your senior years? I don't think you do.

Antioxidants from vegetables, fruits, and supplements can help protect against oxidation by the sun. Supplementing with an extra 10 to 15 mg of natural beta-carotene can also protect your skin and limit the damage of the UV rays. But be safe—use sunblock on all your exposed skin every time you venture outdoors. Check the label for how often you need to reapply, because putting it on once won't last all day with most products.

There are other challenges we face in the summer. Next up in Wednesday's message is about moving safely through all the extra physical labor we take on in summer and then allergies on Saturday. Believe me, this allergy season is the worst. You need to read that message.

What are you prepared to do today?

**Dr. Chet**

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