



## SHIELD YOURSELF

All-in-one protectors.

by Alyssa Schottland-Bauman / photography by Clinton Hussey

It's summer: finally time to shed those layers and soak up the warmth of the sun. That glowing, golden bronze has long been synonymous with glamour, beauty and radiating health—yet the sun takes such a toll on our precious skin. Ultraviolet rays are invisible but intense rays of sunlight that break down the skin's collagen, elastin and other proteins, causing premature signs of aging like wrinkles, fine lines, sun spots, discoloration and exposed blood vessels—everything we strive so hard to delay and avoid. The deep suntan we all crave is actually damaging to the first layer of the skin; the rich brown colour is the body's way of preventing even more harm. Each moment our skin spends unprotected in the sun catches up with us. As they say: tan now, weather later.

But some sun is good. Vitamin D, known predominantly for aiding bone health, is produced in our bodies with sun exposure. Vitamin D has more recently been linked to reducing the risk of autoimmune disorders including multiple sclerosis and diabetes, as well as some types of cancer. Some European studies have even concluded that adequate vitamin D levels may help heal virtually any health condition. So what does that mean for us? Get outside—for a little while anyway. Dr. Benjamin Barankin, a member of the Canadian Dermatology Association and a Toronto-based dermatologist, says, "Between five and 15 minutes a day of unprotected sun exposure will replenish vitamin D stocks for most people, depending on skin colour." (That is, the lighter you are, the less time you need.) "Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen for any time longer," he recommends. Suntans and sunburns may fade after several days, but the damage to your skin remains. "So to reap the benefits without stressing your skin, get your sunshine during non-peak-burn times, before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m."

Most of us don't use nearly enough sunscreen. Barankin advocates using "approximately one ounce to all exposed parts of the body. So if using a four-ounce bottle, then one quarter of the bottle is applied at once." Quite shocking, considering most of us likely go through only one or two bottles of sunscreen during the entire summer.

But moving outside won't necessarily cure us of all our skin and health woes. Skin-aging pollutants from car exhaust, smog, second-hand smoke and other environmental elements wreak havoc on the complexion. "There's no question pollution has a harmful impact on skin," says Marie-Hélène Lair, head of Scientific Communication at Chanel. "Eighty per cent of premature aging is due to unprotected sun exposure, but pollution actually boosts the effects of sun damage. Pollutant particles sit on skin, causing irritation, dehydration, uneven skin tone, inflammation and redness, making wrinkles and sun spots more pronounced. Think of the face as if it were your car windshield—you see spots on it within an hour of being outside." To that end, sunscreen alone isn't enough protection anymore. Chanel recently launched UV Essentiel, a new lotion that protects against both sun and city. The next generation in skin protection, it contains antioxidants like vitamins C and E, green tea (rich in polyphenols), pomegranate, resveratrol (found in grape seeds and red wine), genistein (found in soy products) and coffeeberry extract, all of which work with the skin to enhance its natural defences to counteract photo-aging caused by sun exposure and pollution. "Antioxidants and botanicals work to isolate the skin from the pollution particles. It's like wearing an invisible veil," Lair says. "Nothing penetrates the skin." And if left unchecked, free-radical damage, caused by pollutants and sun exposure, goes much deeper than mere vanity issues; it's been linked to heart disease, cancer, cataracts and a weakened immune system.

Most formulas are light enough to wear underneath makeup, and should be incorporated into your beauty regime. "[Protectors are] the most important part of your daily skin-care routine," Lair says, "and must be applied all year long, no matter the forecast." UVA rays sneak through clouds and onto the face. So even if the sun isn't shining, protect your skin. ☉

FROM LEFT: YVES SAINT LAURENT IDEAL DEFENSE REJUVENATING MULTI-PROTECTION CREME SPF 8, OLE HENRIKSEN SUN-LIGHT PROTECTION CREME WITH GREEN TEA SPF 30, CHANEL UV ESSENTIEL SPF 50, BIOTHERM AQUASOURCE NON STOP SPF 15, SHISEIDO SUN PROTECTION EYE CREAM SPF 32, DIOR ULTRA HYDRATANT DEEP HYDRATION SKIN TINT SPF 20, CLARINS UV PLUS SPF 40, KIEHL'S ABYSSINE CREAM+ SPF 23, TIMELESS SECRET SAVE FACE WATER RESISTANT SUN SHIELD SPF 30, VICHY LIFTACTIVPRO SPF 15.