

Stay Out of the Sun!

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**By Stephen Bucaro**

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Stay Out of the Sun!

By Stephen Bucaro

Scientists believe life on earth started in the sea. That's because before the appearance of the ozone layer, the surface of the earth was bathed in life destroying ultraviolet radiation.

Ozone is a form of oxygen. Whereas, a normal oxygen molecule consists of two oxygen atoms bound together, ozone is three oxygen atoms bound together. Ozone is much less common than normal oxygen. Out of two million oxygen molecules, only three are ozone. Ozone in the stratosphere absorbs ultraviolet radiation, making it safe for life on the surface of the earth.

Ozone molecules in the stratosphere are constantly forming and breaking up. Industrial development has caused the release of chemicals called chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). CFCs in the stratosphere act as a catalyst, breaking down

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ozone molecules. CFC molecules are extremely stable. One CFC molecule can destroy over 100,000 ozone molecules.

CFCs are causing ozone to be destroyed faster than it is created. This has caused the ozone layer to become thinner. In fact, a hole in the ozone layer has opened up over Antarctica. In 2000, the ozone hole measured 32.9 million square kilometers and extended over populated areas of Australia.

Exposure to the ultraviolet radiation in sunlight can result in a skin cancer called "melanoma". According to

the American Cancer Society, each year more than a million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed. Melanoma is a highly invasive form of cancer. Even after treatment, a melanoma can metastasize. Once a melanoma has metastasized, it rarely responds to chemotherapy or radiotherapy. The life expectancy of an individual with metastasized melanoma is only a few months, and over 10,000 people die of skin cancer each year.

Many people like to take off their clothes and lay out in the sun for hours, thinking sunscreen lotion will protect them. They follow the recommendation of using a sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15. However, sweat will cause the sunscreen to wash off and become blotchy, allowing exposure to ultraviolet radiation.

Note: In 1998, epidemiologist Merianne Berwick of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York evaluated several studies on sunscreen use. Her conclusion: There is absolutely no evidence that the use of sunscreen prevents skin cancer. In fact, five of the studies found that sunscreen users actually had an increased risk of melanoma.

A recent study suggests that 15 minutes of exposure to sunlight each day will cause your skin to produce all the vitamin D your body needs to remain healthy. Here in Arizona, 15 minutes of exposure to sunlight can kill you.

If you must go out in the sun, wear protective clothing regardless of how hot you feel. Even if you are sweating like Niagara Falls, always wear long sleeves and a hat.

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Don't forget to cover areas like your neck and hands. Don't walk over bright surfaces like concrete for long periods of time. Your face can be exposed to ultraviolet radiation reflected from the ground.

If you like to go outdoors, go out in the morning or evening when the sun is 45 degrees or less above the horizon. At this angle, sunlight is filtered through a thick layer of atmosphere. You know it's safe to be outdoors when objects shadows are longer than the objects are tall.

Before the appearance of the ozone layer, the surface of the earth was bathed in ultraviolet radiation making it impossible for life to exist. Unfortunately, modern industrial society has created ozone destroying CFC molecules, putting life on earth back in danger.

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None

### **Are Sun Rooms Safe?**

**By Matt Shupe**

Most Americans prefer having a roof deck in their homes just so they can have their private tanning sessions. Others opt for sun rooms or solariums to get that sought-after tan.

The concept of a solarium or sun room has changed over the years, from the rooftop solarium of a house as it is known in Rome to the castle roof solarium as it was known during the medieval period. During the olden times, solariums were typically located at the upper floor of the house, usually with large windows surrounding the room to welcome sunlight.

Solariums were not really made for tanning then, because medieval women used the solariums as their nook where they spend hours gossiping and exchanging pleasantries.

During the modern times, the sun rooms became more extravagant and elegant. Today, sun rooms are

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built surrounded by window glasses. Some sun rooms are even built with walls made of glass. Sun rooms today are also used by the family members as a relaxation area where they can entertain visitors or host parties. Today, sun rooms are also built to serve as greenhouses where exotic plants are kept and grown.

The concept of using sun rooms as tanning rooms is relatively new but it has attracted homeowners who find the idea practical. Instead of going to tanning shops or spas, there are home owners who buy use the sun rooms for personal tanning sessions.

Solariums or sun rooms are more popular during summer when the whole household can avail of in-house tanning services. Some get their own portable beds and stay in their sun rooms the rest of the day.

Having your own sub room can be practical and cost effective. It can save you time and money in going to tanning salons. However, people who use sun rooms for tanning purposes should be aware of the dangers of too much exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays.

Even if you are just in you sun room, you have to make sure you are protected by wide-brimmed hats. To be more practical about it, use sun protecting creams or sunscreens with higher protection level. The common belief is that a person does not need sunscreen if he is just in the confines of his home. Of course, a sun room is just within your home but you are getting more sun exposure there so you have to protect your skin and your eyes.

You can enjoy your sun rooms but do not endanger your health by enjoying your sun rooms without proper protection.

The author is a regular contributor to

where more information about

sunroom designs and sources is freely available.

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