

For Your Health

Skin Protection and Care

At Aetna, we believe there is nothing more important than your health. That's why we're pleased to give you information to help you manage your health.

Read on to learn more.

Your Skin From Head to Toe

You've got a lot of skin, about 20 square feet of it. With so much skin hanging out there in the heat and cold, wind and sun, it's not surprising that you might have the occasional bump or blemish. What about that scaly patch of skin on your knee (might be psoriasis) or that rough red patch of skin on your nose (could be skin cancer)? Is it serious? Is there a cure or some type of treatment? The answer to the latter is usually yes.

Starting Early To Avoid Skin Cancer and Aging

The most serious skin maladies, cancer and premature aging of the facial skin, are often preventable. The risk of premature aging of the skin and of basal and squamous cell cancers can be reduced easily by protecting yourself against the sun's ultraviolet light, which damages the DNA in skin cells and can lead to cancer.

While it's important for adults to slather on the sunscreen, children also need protection. About 80 percent of your lifetime sun exposure happens before age 18. Even a couple of blistering sunburns in childhood increase the risk of later skin cancer, according to the American Academy of Dermatology. The deep wrinkling and leather-like appearance of aging facial skin can be attributed to sunlight damage. Have a look at an area of your skin that's rarely exposed to the sun — your inner upper arm, for instance. Compare that with the skin on the back of your hands or face to get an appreciation of what sunlight is doing to your skin. Although less significant, smoking also causes wrinkling of the skin.

Sun protection is more than just slathering on sunscreen lotion. Although using sunscreen is better than having no protection at all, the best protection is to avoid direct sunlight between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Click here to find more information about your skin from head to toe.

Visit Your Personal Self-Service Member Website Online!

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Additional information is available on Aetna's consumer health information website, Aetna IntelliHealth, at <http://www.intelihealth.com/IH/ih/IH/WSIHW000/9103/21367/245903.html?d=dmContent>.

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