

GUEST EDITORIAL FROM THE ALBANY-DEMOCRAT HERALD

Sunscreen enters bloodstream after one day of use, study says

It took just one day of use for several common sunscreen ingredients to enter the bloodstream at levels high enough to trigger a government safety investigation, according to a pilot study conducted by the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, an arm of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The study, published Monday in the medical journal JAMA, also found that the blood concentration of three of the ingredients continued to rise as daily use continued and then remained in the body for at least 24 hours after sunscreen use ended.

The four chemicals studied — avobenzone, oxybenzone, ecamsule and octocrylene — are part of a dozen that the FDA recently said needed to be researched by manufacturers before they could be considered “generally regarded as safe and effective.”

So should you stop using sunscreen? Absolutely not, experts say.

“Studies need to be performed to evaluate this finding and determine whether there are true medical implications to absorption of certain ingredients,” said Yale School of Medicine dermatologist Dr. David Leffell, a spokesman for the American Academy of Dermatology. He added that in the meantime, people should “continue to be aggressive about sun protection.”

“The sun is the real enemy here,” said Scott Faber, senior vice president for government affairs at the Environmental Working Group, or EWG, an advocacy group that publishes a yearly guide on sunscreens.

“It’s not news that things that you put on your skin are absorbed into the body,” Faber said. “This study is the FDA’s way of showing sunscreen manufacturers they need to do the studies to see if chemical absorption poses health risks.”

According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, more Americans are diagnosed with skin cancer each year than all other cancers combined. Around the world, melanoma ranks as the 19th most common cancer in both men and women, the World Cancer Research Fund says.

In the United States, sunscreens were originally approved as an over-the-counter solution to sunburn. They came in two types: one using chemical combos to filter the sun, the other using minerals to block the sun such as titanium dioxide and zinc oxide, which leave a telltale white coating. With many people not wanting to sport a white tint, the popularity of the chemical sunscreens soared.

Because of the way they were used at the time, there wasn’t a lot of concern about a potential health impact. But that soon changed, and the FDA began to ask the industry for safety testing, said David Andrews, senior scientist at the EWG.

“They were originally used in small quantities to prevent sunburn on vacation,” Andrews said. “Now they recommend applying these every day, applying them to large parts of your body. And the FDA began raising concerns.”

The new FDA study enrolled 24 healthy volunteers who were randomly assigned to a spray or lotion sunscreen that contained avobenzone, oxybenzone or octocrylene as ingredients or a crème sunscreen that contained the chemical ecamsule.

The volunteers were asked to put their assigned sunscreen on 75% of their bodies four times each day for four days. Thirty blood samples were taken from each volunteer over seven days.

Of the six people using the ecamsule cream, five had levels of the chemical in their blood considered statistically significant by the end of day one. For the other three chemicals, especially oxybenzone, all of the volunteers showed significant levels after the first day.

“Looking through the results tables of the study, one thing about oxybenzone stood out,” Andrews said. “Oxybenzone was absorbed into the body at about 50 to 100 times higher concentration than any of these other three chemicals they tested.”

GLOBAL WARMING ACCELERATING ANIMAL EXTINCTIONS — U.N. REPORT



Your views

Ebbert: Do we really want to be an Empire of the USA?

To the Editor:
The last time America had a direct experience with an empire it was as a colony and controlled by an inexperienced and mentally unstable monarch who demanded an oath of allegiance to himself rather than the nation. The monarch, King George III of England, changed prime ministers frequently until he found a dependable friend in Frederick North who was allegedly the worst prime minister in British history. George was involved in many military conflicts at the same time and placed his nation deeply in debt. Anyone in opposition to his policies enraged and embittered him. At the end of the seven-year war with France, England was so deeply in debt it passed the Stamp Act and then the tea duty, among others, in an effort to tax the colonies and pay the debt. This in turn led to the American Revolution and our rejection of the monarchy.

Is any of this beginning to sound familiar? The U.S. has pretty much destroyed Iraq and Syria; the war in Afghanistan is the longest war in our history; we are supporting the destruction of Yemen by providing arms to Saudi Arabia; Venezuela is being threatened with

military action unless it accepts our choice of a Venezuelan president; and we have troops in Africa for an undeclared peace action.

I ask again, have we become an empire, and is this what we want? It is time to return this nation to one of respect for our Constitution, the rights of humanity and the observance of its laws.

David Ebbert
Enterprise

McCracken: Natural methods for vector control make far more sense

To the Editor:
Statistics listing the leading causes of death by age in America are stunning. The second and third most common causes between ages 1 and 9 are congenital anomalies and malignant neoplasms (cancer). For those age 10 to 14, malignant neoplasms is the third most common cause.

Studies now show both congenital anomalies and malignant neoplasms are closely related to chemical exposure, as are autism, asthma, Alzheimer’s, attention deficit disorder, diabetes and others (“Wide Range of Diseases Linked to Pesticides,” by Owens, Feldman, Kepner). Voters must rethink support for vector control, which delivers pesticides directly into our air, ground water and yards.

Michael Skinner’s studies show that

chemical exposure can alter our DNA and that these changes are evident three generations later (“The Toxins That Affected Your Great-Grandparents Could Be in Your Genes,” www.Smithsonian.com).

Seat belts and gun safety classes help reduce auto and gun deaths. Implementing behavior for avoiding contact with mosquitoes and ticks would lower the incident of vector-borne disease as well. After the deadly unintended consequences of chemicals are factored in, natural methods for vector control make far more sense.

Slick advertising has us buying overpriced dangerous chemicals to keep mosquitoes and ticks away. Each year requires a greater concentration or more applications since mosquitoes constantly evolve to stay alive and breed.

Summer should be throbbing with life. Insect buzz and bird song and frog croaking are all tied together. Insects and their larvae are near the bottom of summer’s food chain and support everything above them. Poisoning them affects a wide range of life.

In my yard, there are numerous bird and bat boxes as well as good standing water. Frogs discovered the water. Birds and bats fly over, mouths agape, in the evenings. Magpies take tadpoles as they emerge from the water. Let’s live

Write to us

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters are limited to 350 words and must be signed and carry the author’s address and phone number (for verification purposes only). Email your letters to news@lagrandeobserver.com or mail them to La Grande Observer, 1406 5th St., La Grande, 97850.

CORRECTION

Due to a misunderstanding, The Observer published the letter to the editor, written by Doran Hopkins and titled “County needs to stop the nonsense spending” on Friday, May 3 after the author had asked for a retraction.

with and support nature one yard at a time.

If this approach appeals to you, post Do Not Spray signs and call vector control at 541-963-2974 to give them your address. They have the right to go onto your property until specifically instructed to stay out.

Mary McCracken
Island City

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