

Keeping well during cold and flu season

DR MICHAEL OSBORNE, CHIROPRACTOR

WHAT goes around comes around. But what if it didn't have to?

Of course, I'm talking about the colds and flus that get around at this time of year. It's the season when workplaces and schools become incubators of viruses. Everyone knows someone who is going through tissues at a prodigious rate.

We all have an immune system, but what is it doing at this time of year?

Winter is an opportunistic time for viruses to take hold.

Generally speaking, we spend less time outside because the weather is less pleasant.

We get less fresh air, spend more time sharing air with others, and, importantly, get less sunshine.

The sun is also further away, so each drop of sunshine contains less vitamin D, meaning you are more likely to be deficient in one of the most important vitamins for immune response.

As vitamin D also regulates mood, a lack of it is likely to send you to the cupboard looking for sugar to lift your mood.

Sugar may boost mood, but it weakens the immune system through multiple methods.

Another important aspect of immune response is proper functioning of the nervous system.

Like it does for every other organ in the body, the nervous system coordinates communication for, and acts as a stimulant of, the immune system.

Your local chiropractor is professionally trained in assessing, and removing, sources of interference to the nervous system.

Removing interference to the nervous system is one more thing you can do to keep what goes around from coming around.

Dr Michael Osborne is a chiropractor at HealthGuard Wellness, Toowoomba, and a member of the Chiropractors Association of Australia.

Winter-proof your skin

Try these super skincare solutions now the cold weather is here

KATE MARIE

NONE of us are immune to the effects of aging on our skin. We dread the wrinkling, the random appearance of strange lumps and bumps and then the winter-related scaly bits on our legs.

Aging is not always pretty, but thanks to modern medicine there are medical-grade solutions at hand. The ones that really work contain active ingredients and are known as cosmeceuticals.

There is now unequivocal scientific evidence that the regular application of cosmeceuticals, including retinoids, antioxidants, emollients, peptides, vitamins, hormones, phytochemicals and many other active agents, improves the skin's appearance and/or prevents its deterioration.

Here are some steps to winter-proof your skin.

Continue to use sunscreen

Don't be fooled into thinking that because we get more overcast days we don't need to protect our skin. UV radiation is not related to temperature and clouds only modestly reduce the intensity of harmful UVB rays and have little effect on UVA.

Use an exfoliant

As we age, the speed at which we shed our outermost layer of skin slows down. Certain treatments that have an exfoliation effect can help these dead skin cells detach and fall off more rapidly than if left alone.

By removing the old dead cells we can achieve a "lustre" or "gloss" effect on our skin, as the underlying cells revealed after exfoliation are moisture rich, more reflective and more uniform.

This drives younger, plumper cells to the surface and their greater moisture content makes the skin look and feel younger.

Look for cleansing and exfoliation products that include alpha-hydroxy acids such as glycolic acid.

AHAs work to remove excess dead cells from the skin's surface, stimulate healing and turnover, and allow new skin cells to emerge by replacing the old and



MISSION CRITICAL: Use a good moisturiser to help combat dry, itchy skin caused by lower humidity in winter.

PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

damaged skin, thus improving skin texture, colour and appearance.

Religiously apply moisturiser

The heating of cold outdoor air during winter months can decrease indoor humidity levels to below 30%, which is not much different from the level found in the Sahara Desert. This is one of the reasons we may suffer from dry, itchy skin in the colder months ("winter-itch") especially as we get older.

Use of a good moisturiser is mission-critical. Luckily the most expensive moisturisers are not necessarily the best.

There are lots of well-crafted moisturisers that contain old-fashioned ingredients that outperform many of the newer hyped-up products.

Also just because a product contains a particular active in-

LUCKILY THE MOST EXPENSIVE MOISTURISERS ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE BEST.

redient doesn't mean it will work, so look for moisturisers that also deliver the right amounts of active components such as sunscreen (SPF), antioxidants, vitamins, botanicals, cell-communicators and other restorative agents.

Look for cosmeceutical products with proven ingredients

Damage to our skin is partly driven by the generation of highly reactive and toxic free radicals.

Damage caused by free radicals is a key trigger for inflammation and cell breakdown and the cause of wrinkles.

Antioxidants will not undo this damage but may boost our natural protection against further damage.

Look for products that include certain vitamins and other active ingredients, but keep in mind that regardless of the hype, it is not exactly known which antioxidant or combination is the most effective.

As a rule, look for products containing a number of different antioxidants to maximise the potential benefits.

There are thousands of different antioxidants and here are some of the common ones:

- Vitamin C (ascorbate, l-ascorbic acid)
- Vitamin E (tocopherols and tocotrienols)
- Vitamin B3 (niacin, nicotinic acid, nicotinamide or niacinamide)
- Polyphenols, flavonoids and carotenoids

■ Retinoids (a family of chemicals that are relatives of vitamin A).

Putting it together

The causes of skin aging are many and varied and skincare alone won't slow it down. It is important to bolster all systems and focus on internal health.

Simple things such as drinking lots of water, getting good sleep, removing sugar from your diet, eating lots of colourful vegetables and getting daily exercise (where you huff and puff) will also give your skin a boost.

Kate is a health technology expert, writer and activist against ageism. She is a co-author of the best-selling book *Fast Living, Slow Ageing*, and co-author of *Slow Ageing Guide to Skin Rejuvenation*. Find out more at slowaging.org.

TRAVEL THE WORLD WITH YOUR QT

Here and overseas?
Great travel ideas, deals and adventures every Tuesday & Saturday in the QT.



www.qt.com.au

PRINT | ONLINE | MOBILE | SOCIAL

