



EAP Newsletter

Issue 20
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The summer health and skincare edition

In this month's newsletter we talk about managing summer holiday stress, mole awareness, the impact of stress and anxiety on the skin and what you need to know about Hives and Rosacea.

School's out: A short guide to managing summer holiday stress

Although the kids are pumped for six-weeks out of school, we appreciate that as parents and carers you may feel quite the opposite. It's no secret how difficult it can be to juggle childcare with work commitments.

We don't have a magic wand to make the school holidays completely effortless and stress free. But we do have experts on hand with helpful advice to make the six-week holiday feel a little more manageable.

Feeling stressed about summer? You're not alone.

1/3 of parents say the school holidays leave them feeling stressed.

47% of parents worry about thinking of things to do with children.

1/4 of parents say they feel exhausted.

52% of parents say the cost of taking children out for activities causes them the most stress during the holidays.

**Research by Space Station*



Six ways to help parents and carers manage summer holiday stress



1. Be kind to yourself

As parents or carers, we have the tendency to put the needs of our family ahead of our own wellbeing, particularly in the summer holidays.

However, it's important to know that putting time aside for yourself isn't selfish. In reality, it'll give you the space you need to recharge your own batteries which will, in turn, enable you to be more present with your own children.

Give yourself ten minutes in the day to enjoy a cup of tea or a refreshing drink in the garden, or go for a short walk at the end of the day as the sun is setting.



2. Be aware of your thoughts

Sometimes we're much harder on ourselves in our own thoughts than we would be to anyone else we speak to.

You may find negative or self-berating thoughts run through your mind, such as "I'm awful for not spending time with my kids today" or "My kids are bored because I haven't organised enough for them".

First, imagine a friend is sharing these feelings with you.

Second, question how you would respond to them. It's likely you'd comfort your friend and give them support and reassurance.

Now, try to respond to your negative or self-critical thoughts in this kinder way, giving yourself the same positive encouragement you would give to a friend.



3. Manage expectations

In reality, similar to all of us, kids generally enjoy the simple things in life. Get organised and write down a list of cost-effective and simple activities that feel manageable

for you. Your list could include spending time with family and friends at the park, or activities like face painting, using straws and washing up liquid to create bubbles, or water fights with plastic cups. If you have older children, you could put an hour aside to make pizzas one afternoon, or, set up your own cinema room by pulling the curtains, making some popcorn and watching a film.



4. Practice mindfulness together

Mindfulness is a great way to calm and centre the body, and it's easier to integrate into family life than you might think. Children are great imitators and will likely take

your lead, even on small things like kicking off your shoes and feeling the grass under your feet.

Try simple mindfulness exercises together - lie on your back, look up at the sky and see what shape clouds you can spot, make daisy chains, look for bugs and insects, pot some plants, or take colouring pencils to the park and use nature as your inspiration.

Did you know?

It's okay for children to 'be bored' now and then. In fact, independent play time or uninterrupted time alone helps a child to build problem-solving skills and teaches independence. You may find this is when your child becomes most creative and inventive. Remember - you don't have to fill every minute of the day with something fun and exciting.



5. Ask for help

The adage “**it takes a village to raise a child**” is still true today. Remember that it’s OK to ask for support from family and friends and using the additional clubs and

activities on offer for children in the summer holidays in no way makes you a lazy parent. It’s important to weave in child-free time for yourself during the holidays.



6. Recognise the importance of social self care

It’s really important to weave ‘adult time’ into your day-to-day life. This can be tricky if you don’t have access to childcare or live

close to family members who might be able to offer this support. If this sounds like the situation you’re in, you could arrange a picnic or play-date in the local park with other parents from school so you have the opportunity to catch up with other adults. If you’re struggling to find ‘adult time’ it’s likely other parents at school are, too.

Try this today

If you have a child (or children) who is more anxious in social settings, it can help to build a familiar network of parents or carers and their children, and organise weekly or bi-weekly catch-ups together. Keeping a routine of activity and ensuring the people you spend time with are familiar helps to create a balance where you are able to address your child’s needs and yours.



Mole awareness: Non-melanoma and melanoma skin cancer explained

With summer in full swing, many of us will be spending time in the sunshine. Whilst the warmth of the sun can feel good on your skin, it's important to remember that over-exposure to the sun can be dangerous - in fact, over-exposure to the sun is the most common cause of skin cancer.

Skin cancers can look very different and the symptoms vary from person to person, so it can be difficult to determine whether a change on the skin or to a mole is something more serious.

So, our derma experts have shared what you need to know about different types of skin cancer and the signs and changes to look out for...

Non-melanoma versus melanoma skin cancer - what you need to know.

What is non-melanoma skin cancer?

Non-melanoma skin cancer most often develops on skin that's been exposed to sun and tends to affect men more than women. Most cases of non-melanoma skin cancer are successfully cured.

Key facts:

There are nearly **156,000** new cases of non-melanoma skin cancer cases in the UK each year, which equates to nearly 430 every day (2016-2018).

Since the early 1990s, non-melanoma skin cancer incidence rates have increased by **169%** in the UK.

Each year **almost half** of all new non-melanoma skin cancer cases in the UK are diagnosed in people aged 75 and over (2016-2018).

Signs and symptoms of non-melanoma skin cancer

1

A sore that doesn't heal - the sore can look see-through, shiny and pink or pearly white. It can also look red. It may feel sore, rough and have raised edges.

4

Red patches on your skin - these red patches could also be itchy. This could be due to other non cancerous skin conditions. But get it checked to make sure.

2

An ulcer - look out for an area of skin that has broken down (an ulcer) and doesn't heal within 4 weeks, and you can't think of a reason for this change.

5

Freckles or moles - a change to a mole or freckle can be a sign of another type of skin cancer called melanoma.

3

A lump - this might be small, slow growing, shiny and pink or red.

What is melanoma skin cancer?

Melanoma is a type of skin cancer that can spread to other areas of the body. The main cause of melanoma is UV light from the sun and sunbeds. The chances of getting melanoma increase with age, if you have pale skin, a history of skin cancer in the family or a large number of moles.

Key facts:

There are **16,000+** new cases of melanoma skin cancer each year (2016-2018 average, UK)

87% of people survive melanoma skin cancer for 10 or more years (2013-2017, England)

87% of melanoma skin cancer cases are preventable (2015, UK)

Signs and symptoms of melanoma skin cancer

A new mole or a change in an existing mole may be a sign of melanoma. The **ABCDE** rule of skin cancer is a simple, easy-to-remember checklist to help determine whether a mole or growth may be cancerous:



A

Asymmetrical - this refers to the shape of the mole. Melanomas are likely to have an uneven shape. The two halves of the area may be different shapes (asymmetrical). Normal moles usually have a more even shape and the two halves are similar (symmetrical).



B

Border - this refers to the edges of the mole. Melanomas are more likely to have irregular edges (border) that might be blurred or jagged. Normal moles usually have a smooth, regular border.



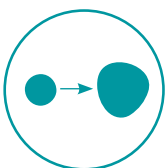
C

Colour - this refers to the colour of the mole. Melanomas are often an uneven colour and contain more than one shade. The melanoma might have different shades of black, brown and pink. Normal moles usually have an even colour.



D

Diameter - this refers to how wide the mole is. Most melanomas are more than 6mm wide. Normal moles are usually about the size of the end of a pencil or smaller.



E

Evolving - this refers to a changing mole or condition in the skin. Melanomas might change in size, shape or colour. Or you might notice other changes such as a mole bleeding, itching or becoming crusty. Normal moles usually stay the same size, shape, and colour.

**Source information NHS and Cancer Research UK*

How to enjoy the sun safely

The sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays are the strongest in the UK between 11am and 3pm from mid-March to mid-October. During this time, the sun may be strong enough to cause damage. Take extra care to protect your skin, especially if you get sunburnt easily:



1. Spend time in the shade, especially between 11am and 3pm in the UK.



2. Cover up with clothes, a wide-brimmed hat and UV protection sunglasses.



3. And use a sunscreen with at least SPF15 and 4 or 5 stars. Use it generously, reapply regularly and use together with shade and clothing*.

The [NHS recommends](#) that children under 6 months should be kept out of direct sunlight.

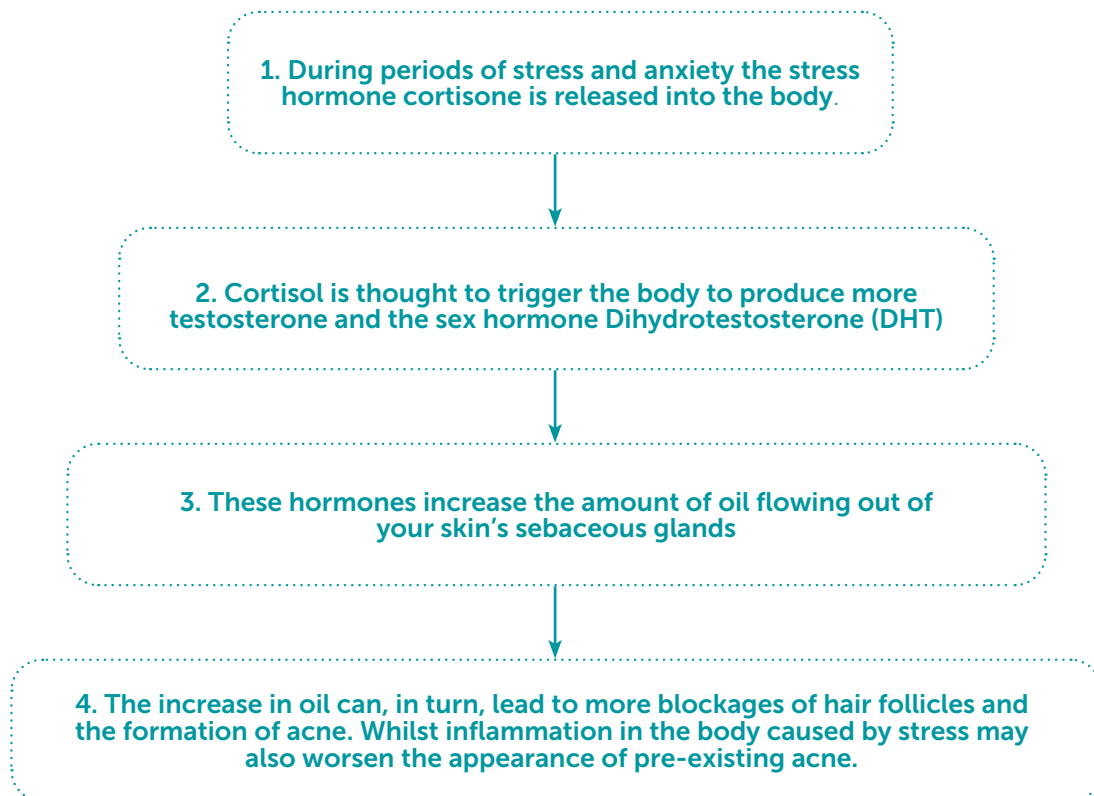
**Source information Cancer Research UK*



What impact does stress and anxiety have on your skin?

As the body's largest organ, our skin often reflects what's happening inside our bodies. In fact, stress and anxiety can lead to increased inflammation, slow down wound healing and negatively impact existing skin conditions.

So, what happens to our skin when we feel stressed and anxious?



It's not just stress and anxiety that cause acne and other skin conditions. Contributing factors also include:



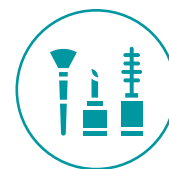
DNA and hormones



Bacteria



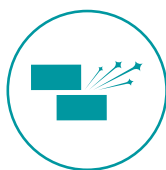
Menstruation and pregnancy



Cosmetics



Diet



Friction or rubbing



Medical conditions



Medication

What you need to know about Hives and Rosacea

Whilst summer brings with it a whole host of health benefits, an increase in allergies, UV rays and heat can cause havoc with our skin - particularly for those who have pre-existing skin conditions.

Our derma experts have delved into two skin conditions that are more common than you think - Hives and Rosacea - and shared common signs, triggers and management techniques for each.

Hives

What are Hives?

Hives are caused by an allergic reaction and appear as an itchy rash caused by tiny amounts of fluid that leak from blood vessels just under the skin surface. A trigger causes cells in the skin to release chemicals such as histamine. This itchy rash is also known as urticaria or as nettle rash.

Hives are not contagious. However, some people develop hives when they have a contagious disease like strep throat or a common cold. If someone with hives has a contagious disease, you can catch the contagious disease — but not hives.

Signs of Hives

The main symptom of hives is an itchy rash. The rash can:

- ✔ be raised bumps or patches in many shapes and sizes
- ✔ appear anywhere on the body
- ✔ be on 1 area or spread across the body
- ✔ feel itchy, sting or burn
- ✔ look pink or red when affecting someone with white skin; the colour of the rash can be harder to see on brown and black skin

Common triggers



Eating certain foods



Contact with certain plants, animals, chemicals and latex



Cold, such as cold water or wind



Hot, sweaty skin from exercise, emotional stress or eating spicy food



A reaction to a medicine, insect bite or sting



Scratching or pressing on your skin, such as wearing itchy or tight clothing



An infection



A problem with your immune system



Water or sunlight, but this is rare

Treatment

See a GP if the symptoms do not improve after two days, you're worried about your child's hives, the rash is spreading, hives keeps coming back (you may be allergic to something), you also have a high temperature and feel unwell and if you also have swelling under your skin (this might be angioedema).

A GP might prescribe menthol cream, antihistamines or steroid tablets. If hives do not go away with treatment, you may be referred to a skin specialist.

How to manage Hives

Try to find out what triggers hives for you, so you can avoid those triggers, if possible. This may help prevent an episode of hives.



Rosacea

What are Rosacea?

Rosacea is psoriasis of the face. It is a long term condition that is more common in women and people with lighter skin, but symptoms can be worse in men.

Rosacea is not caused by poor hygiene and it is not contagious. Around one in 20 people in the UK have Rosacea.

Signs of Rosacea

- ✔ Redness across your nose, cheeks, forehead, chin, neck and chest that comes and goes, usually lasting for a few minutes each time – your face may also feel warm, hot or painful
- ✔ A burning or stinging feeling when using water or skincare products
- ✔ Dry skin
- ✔ Swelling
- ✔ Yellow-orange patches on the skin
- ✔ Sore eyelids or crusts around roots of eyelashes
- ✔ Thickened skin, mainly on the nose (usually appears after many years)

Common triggers

Common triggers to Rosacea are:

- ✔ alcohol
- ✔ spicy foods
- ✔ hot drinks
- ✔ sunlight
- ✔ hot or cold temperatures
- ✔ aerobic exercise, like running
- ✔ being stressed



Treatment

Rosacea cannot be cured, but you can seek treatment from a GP to help control the symptoms. Rosacea can get worse if it's not treated.

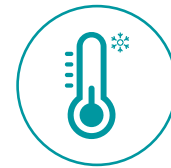
How to manage Rosacea



**Wear a high SPF
sunscreen of at least SPF
30 every day**



**Try to avoid heat,
sunlight or humid
conditions if possible**



**Try to cover your face in
cold weather**



**Use gentle skincare
products for sensitive skin**



**Clean your eyelids at least
once a day if you have
blepharitis**



**Take steps to
manage stress**



And finally, our tip of the month; the one thing we ask you to do today if you do nothing else...

Get to know your own skin. To spot skin cancer early it helps to know how your skin normally looks. That way, you'll notice any changes more easily. To look at areas you can't see easily, you could try using a hand held mirror and reflect your skin onto another mirror. Or you could get your partner or a friend to look. This is very important if you're regularly outside in the sun for work or leisure.

You can take a photo of anything that doesn't look quite right. If you can, it's a good idea to put a ruler or tape measure next to the abnormal area when you take the photo. This gives you a more accurate idea about its size and can help you tell if it's changing. You can then show these pictures to your doctor.

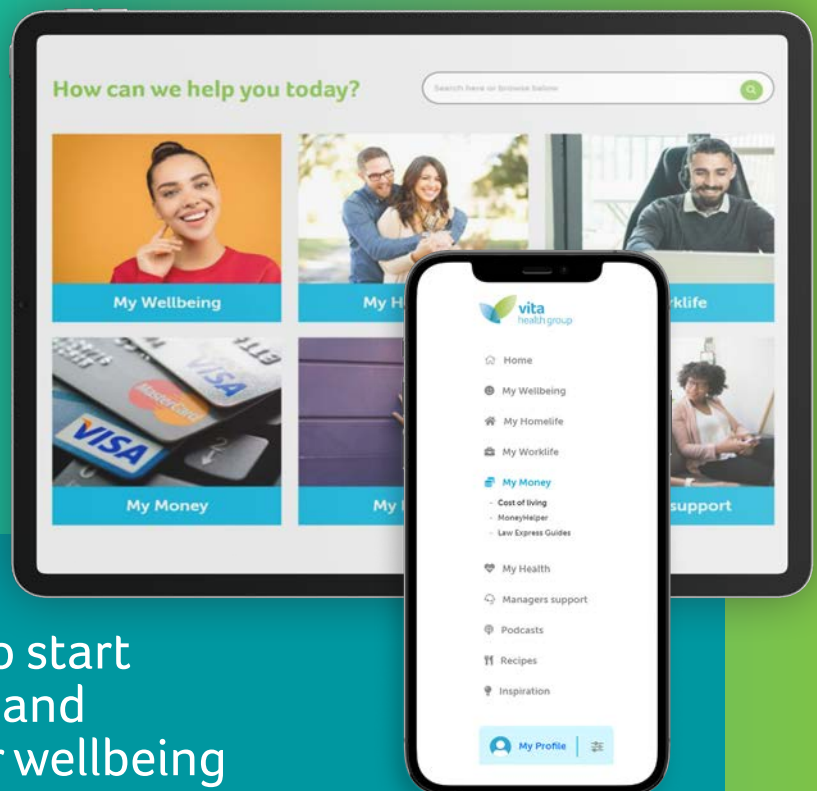
Book an appointment with your GP if you have any skin abnormality, such as a lump, ulcer, lesion or skin discolouration that has not healed after four weeks - while it's unlikely to be skin cancer, it's always best to get it checked

Wellbeing Hub

Helping you to manage the daily challenges of life and work

We have created a range of guidance and practical advice on how to cope with the cost of living crisis.

Simply visit www.my-EAP.com and use the organisational code provided to access the site. Visit our cost of living page in our **My Money** section.



Scan the QR code today to start your journey and improve your wellbeing