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Sunshine On My Shoulders



We really weren't there for the race. Sure, I am a bit of a running and racing fanatic, who seems to find himself at a running event most weekends. But this was not really about running to me. My wife and I went to the March on Melanoma over the weekend to support our friend, Dina Bair and her cause.

Dina is a a great journalist, mother, athlete and friend. She is also a cancer survivor. So when she invited my wife and I to run the race Sunday morning, we agreed without hesitation. It was a nice little race along the lakefront path beginning near Montrose Harbor. They had about 250 runners. Dina invited a couple other media friends as well, and we posed for a picture. From left to right are myself and my wife, Dina, Anthony Ponce, and Amy Jacobson.



It was a fun gathering. So much fun, in fact, that I was in the back talking with a few people when the starting gun sounded. So I took off with really no objective other than to get a brisk workout in, and finish in time to get my camera and take pictures of some of the other finishers.



I barely managed the second goal. But I did quickly get in position to snap pictures of my wife before she crossed the line. A short time later Amy came charging in. I missed Anthony because he cruised in well ahead of me at about 18:30. He's planning on running the Chicago marathon in October, and I'm excited to see how well he should run then.



After the race, however, was the most important part of the morning. The organizers spoke a little about the reason we were all there. And Dina gave an emotional talk about her own experience with cancer. She is now cancer free, but feels the 'survivor's guilt' that is common among those who have seen and experienced up close this terrible disease that destroys so many lives.



I admit it. I often set bad examples. My wife is always reminding me to put sunscreen on the kids before they go out. Sometimes I remember. I almost never use it myself. Fortunately, despite that, my skin apparently is healthy. The only reason I know that is because I saw a doctor for a free screening in a tent they had set up after the race. I have been lucky, but there is no assurance that my luck will continue.

I spend a lot of time outside, and am exposed to the sun, especially when running. I have never worn sunscreen on a run, but after reading some of the advice from my friend, Dr. Brooke Jackson, I realize I've been taking some pretty serious risks. Brooke is an athlete herself, as well as a dermatologist. Below is some advice from her.

Dr. Brooke Jackson, Dermatologist and Founder of The Skin Wellness Center of Chicago (www.skinwellnesscenter.org), has several tips to protect skin when running. She is an avid runner and will be completing her ninth marathon this year's Bank of America Chicago Marathon in October.

"Most runner's train their bodies for race day but one thing they often overlook is preparing their skin," said Dr. Brooke Jackson of the Skin Wellness Center of Chicago. "By running outdoors your skin is vulnerable to the elements."

Here are a few summer sun safety tips to think about before heading out on your training runs:

· Time of runs:

- *Run in the early morning or late afternoon to avoid the sun at its peak.*

· Remove makeup before running and wash your face as soon as possible upon completion of workout:

- *Minimize bacterial overload and acne breakouts by using a gentle cleanser (such as Cetaphil, Cerave, Olay) after workouts.*
- *Medicated and harsh cleaners can be too irritating if pores are open after a workout.*
- *Hold any acne medications or anti-aging products a day or two before to minimize sun sensitivity.*

· Wear a Hat:

- *Visors do not protect the top of your scalp, so a better choice would be a hat made with sun-wicking, breathable material such as Dry-Fit.*
- *This shields the face and prevents damage to hair, especially color*

treated hair.

· **Wear Sunblock:**

- *Sun protection is the best way to prevent premature aging.*
- *For runners- apply sunblock from cheeks down to avoid it getting into eyes and stinging.*
- *Use a minimum of SPF 45 and re-apply after 90 minutes. SPF protects against UVB, but you also need certain ingredients in your sunblock to protect against UVA, so look for: titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, mexoryl, helioplex.*
- *Use water or alcohol-based sunblock for working out to avoid clogging pores (For example, Coppertone Sport Block is ideal) and use a spray sunblock, since runners will be sweating.*
- *Don't forget your lips, back of legs, scalp and back of neck!*

· **Use sunblock, not sunscreen**

- *Sunscreen is like the screen in your windows, allowing penetration of some rays, about 89% filter.*
- *Sunblock is more protective. It often has physical blockers like titanium dioxide and will filter out about 97% of UV rays. giving maximum protection against the sun at an early age. We know that sunburns and large amounts of sun exposure at a young age (prior to age 18) is a HUGE risk for skin cancer later in life.*

· **Wear sunglasses:**

- *Sunglasses are critical since runners have an increased risk of cataracts.*
 - *Be sure to choose sunglasses that are polarized to minimize glare and choose lenses that filter out greater than 95% of the sun's rays. This should be listed on the peel-off label you toss after purchase. So be sure to check before purchasing the sunglasses.*

· **Wear breathable fabrics to work out in – including your top, bottom and socks:**

- *Wick materials sweat from the body and helps minimize breakouts.*
 - *And a t-shirt has an SPF of 8, so it's better than nothing. Solumbra and Coolibar both make nice sun-protective clothing lines: (www.solumbra.com,www.coolibar.com)*

· **Darker skin needs a high SPF too!**

- *There is a skin cancer risk factor for everyone under the sun. Dr. Jackson often sees sun damage done to patients with darker pigmented since people with darker complexions believe they do not need sun protection.*

- *While melanoma is more common in Caucasians, it is deadlier in African-Americans and Hispanics because it's more likely to go undetected and often diagnosed in its late stages of the disease. (Bob Marley died of melanoma.)*
- *Patients with darker complexion skin also suffer from other conditions such as high blood pressure, lupus that require medications that make the skin more sun sensitive.*

For more information or details, please visit the Skin Wellness Center of Chicago at www.skinwellnesscenter.org.

Thanks Brooke. I'll see you on the roads.....

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