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BY ABBY PENNING

When Summer Fades, Skin Concerns Remain

Following a summer in the sun, consumers are now seeking out products to repair sun damage, as well as those that might help prevent future damage.

IMPACT POINTS

- Sun damage can raise a myriad of skin issues, but in a densely populated market, brand targets need to be known in order to develop a good strategy.
- Sun care products that multitask—and therefore include reparative ingredients, as well as SPF, moisturizer and other skin wellness benefits—continue to rise.
- Consumers are encouraged to develop good sun care habits early, although this isn't always the case. An increasing number of younger consumers are mimicking the habits they see displayed by the sun-damaged baby boomer generation.

As summer fades into fall and people begin to seek less time out in the warm sunshine, thoughts are also beginning to turn to any damage skin may have taken on during the sun-drenched summer months. Male and female, young and old, any ethnicity or race—people consistently tend to overexpose themselves to the sun—leading to inflammation, sun spots, wrinkles and fine lines, and further damage that consumers seek to address with skin care products.

“When it comes to the market for sun care, nearly every [consumer is a target consumer]. Everyone has damage associated with sun exposure, so sun care needs to be a daily concern, a regimen,” says Gwen O’Hanlon, vice president of sales and education, Darphin. “We want consumers to evolve with our brand, so we want to develop products that are available to them at every stage of their skin’s life, because skin does change. It’s sort of like clothes—what looked good 20 years ago might not look as good now or be so fashionable, and as skin evolves and its concerns change; you want to make sure you affect positive changes with the appropriate products to encompass the entire journey.”

Noting the evolution of concerns that might result from sun damage, Adam Geyer, MD, a consulting dermatologist for Kiehl’s, says, “Often, when we think about the skin as it is chronically exposed to the sun, we focus mostly on the expected increase in lines and wrinkles. However, we have come to recognize that one of the most significant indicators of the health of skin is the evenness of its tone.”



In my opinion, [a product that hits] the biggest target market would be to combine features of the instant anti-inflammatory, DNA repair and correction of visible signs of photoaging categories all in one product.

—Adam Geyer, MD

Whatever the concern, post-sun skin care is a big market, and brand owners seeking to benefit from it are wise to rely on its strengths—protecting skin with SPF products and repairing damaged skin.

Taking Action

“Post-sun and sun damage repair products cover a wide spectrum of products,” comments Geyer. “These include soothing products for sunburn/damage relief, DNA repair products and products to reduce the chronic effects of UV exposure.”

Each of these designated skin care issue areas supports its own market segment in the beauty industry, which is why it's important to have an understanding of each. “In the first category are products intended for use immediately after sun exposure that aim to soothe inflamed and irritated skin. These products often have botanicals such as aloe with anti-inflammatory effects and that provide some physiologic cooling effect when applied to the skin,” Geyer says. “Though cortisones and aspirin have commonly been used by physicians to quiet inflamed, sunburnt skin, there are an increasing number of new post-sun products that offer a more gentle and botanical anti-inflammatory effect.

“Second, still for use in the acute post-sun period, we are seeing more DNA repair products appearing in the marketplace, aiming to support the cellular machinery that scans for small mutations in our DNA caused by UV exposure with the hope that these defects can be better repaired before they become problematic in the weeks and years to come,” Geyer continues. “Third are the products that help to reduce the negative downstream effects that take place from acute and/or chronic UV exposure—ranging from fine lines to deeper wrinkles, to brown spots, to textural changes.”

As noted, different lines and products can be focused in on different post-sun skin

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needs. "In targeting post-sun skin repair, something for immediate usage would be a product to replenish moisture while also including antioxidants to fight free radicals. And of course, for prevention, moisturizers with a minimum of SPF 15 are a must," notes Joe Pastorkovich, vice president, Lumene North America.

Amos Lavian, founder, Dermelect Cosmeceuticals, says, "Obviously, you want to cool skin that's been exposed to the sun for a long period of time." Lavian also notes the importance of products that help reduce redness and calm inflammation. "They help take the flush out of the face and work to soothe dilated capillaries," he says.

More and more products in this category are also becoming multitaskers. "Needless to say, the first step for damage control after sun exposure is to moisturize your skin," says Sophie Jacques, senior product manager, skin care, Yves Rocher, but she notes Yves Rocher offers products that combine sun care with anti-aging benefits, as well as those that offer ingredients such as aloe vera to soothe and hydrate the body. Additionally, the company offers an age spot-diffusing serum that targets age spots, uneven skin tone and loss of radiance, and even fights wrinkles. "You can use [this product] on hands as well," she notes.

"Exfoliation is also key," Lavian comments, saying sloughing off dead skin cells helps stimulate regeneration and helps decrease unwanted skin pigmentation. He also points out the need for replacing moisture for skin when working to protect it from the sun "We have a facial mist product that I like to refer to as 'Gatorade for your face,'" he says. "It helps bind the moisture and minerals to skin, so even as you sit in the sun and sweat, it helps you replace lost nutrients."

Meeting the Market

With the range of people who can be marketed to with post-sun skin care products, however, it can pose a problem when trying to laser in the focus of a brand. "We make and market all our products to all women and all ages, but for sun care, we are really focusing in on women who are 40+, whose skin is starting to change and they're beginning to see the effects of years of sun damage—wrinkles, dark spots and so on," says Pastorkovich. He notes the entire line recently repackaged its products to

include suggested age ranges on the back of its boxes. "We want to make it easier for consumers to find products that are targeting common problems associated with various age groups," he says.

Howard Epstein, PhD, director of technology and business development, cosmetic actives and bio actives, EMD Chemicals, comments, "Technologies with minimal toxicological concerns are ideal for children and adults with concerns about sensitive skin, while older individuals will seek products that help maintain a youthful appearance in terms of fine lines and wrinkles. Individuals with darker skin will seek products that help to lighten skin and promote a more even skin tone."

Of course, as with the vast majority of the skin care market, an aging generation is one most brand owners tend to see continually seeking solutions. "The baby boomer generation appears to be driving this market," Epstein says. "The 50+ generation is showing signs of sun-induced aging, which is cumulative over the years. They have the disposable income and can experiment with new products designed to help skin remain youthful-looking."

The use of products by baby boomers is also having a trickle-down effect. "The treatment category has become a lot younger," Lavian notes, saying younger women are picking up habits from their mothers, who are addressing their own sun-damage. "We've noticed a lot of daughters following in moms' footsteps, becoming more conscientious and delving into skin care at a much earlier age."

Talking to Consumers

Once products are established for a market, brands also face the challenge of getting the word out about the new products and break through the clutter. "The best way for the [brand owner] to reach the target customers is through a well-designed package with an easy-to-dispense lid or cap that can be removed and [that includes] appropriate, well-written copy on the label with a message that speaks directly to the target consumer," Epstein says. "The marketing, less technical approach seems to work best when the story is told with pictures and bullet-point summaries. The appearance of skin before and after treatment, and how long the improvement took, is very impressive. Our most successful technical presentations are

loaded with relevant biological pathways and data from well-conducted studies that confirm the marketing story."

Packaging remains a vital consumer connection point, a fact that isn't lost in sun care. "Kiehl's has very direct and clear packaging, and they work hard to present their product message in a straightforward and direct way right on the label," says Geyer, and Pastorkovich notes, "We consistently hear that it's very easy to get confused in the retail skin care setting. The women we've talked to say, 'When I get to the shelf, I can't tell what's right for me.' So when we are developing our products and packaging, we work hard to clearly convey the message about the ingredients and what they do, and what kinds of problems they target."

It is often well-educated retailers and salespeople that aid in the education of consumers, too. "The team of customer representatives and educators in the Kiehl's stores are highly trained and work carefully with consumers to match appropriate products with the skin care needs and concerns of their patrons," notes Geyer, and O'Hanlon also speaks to the importance of education. "The key for Darphin is working through educating," she says. "Finding a solution for the problem is our platform, our key to success."

"There are multiple types of consumers and different types of lifestyles," O'Hanlon continues on about reaching target markets. "It's about finding the best way to interact with our consumers, to discover how our products fit into their regimen and continuously work to meet their demands."

Lavian says Dermelect also tries to develop products that cross designations. "We don't try to pigeonhole customers into specific categories," he says. "We want our customers to be satisfied, and that is also about having the right, reasonable expectations. If you have 30 years of sun damage, there's no 30-day quick fix with a topical treatment, but you do need to start somewhere, and that's where a good product comes in."

In the end, the marketing should be about getting attention and getting out the right word. "What is most vital in my discussions with my patients is to ensure consistency of good habits—consistent sunscreen use and, if sun damage occurs, taking an aggressive and early approach to repair that can help to minimize the propagation of negative changes down the road," Geyer says.

Staying Protected

Moving ahead in the post-sun skin care market, products that address a range of issues will continue to be popular, as well as those that feature innovative, interesting ingredients. Of the Kiehl's post-sun line, Geyer explains, "This combination of ingredients works together to do more than just target pigmentation. Vitamin C is a potent ingredient used to treat lines and wrinkles as well as dullness of texture, so though the marketing of this product is geared toward pigmentation, it indeed addresses a broader spectrum of issues associated with photoaging."

Ingredient companies are also working diligently to tend to this market. In early 2011, ISP launched Caspaline 14, a synthetic peptide designed to help the skin's natural barrier function protect against UV rays, as well as promote skin softness and suppleness. And DSM markets its skin-brightening Regu-Fade ingredient as a way to diminish age spots and excessive pigmentation, both of which can be associated with sun-damaged skin, while its ingredients Stimu-Text and Stimu-Text AS

work to soothe irritated skin, fight inflammation and calm itching.

To attract consumers seeking new ingredient solutions, brands are also seeking out unique resources. "Lumene is based out of Finland, and many of our products include natural ingredients found in the Arctic areas of Scandinavia," explains Pastorkovich. "In the spring, the vegetation there really comes alive, and as a result of continuous sunlight around the clock, the plants and berries are incredibly rich with concentrated vitamins."

For the Future

To maintain a healthy glow without any of the damage, however, preventive and protective products still are a strong presence. "It would be my ideal vision as a dermatologist that, over time, we will need to focus less on post-sun products as more and more people will be dedicated to broad-spectrum UV protection and prevention of sun damage, but the reality is that people continue to tan, whether intentionally or unintentionally," Geyer says. "In my opinion, [a product that

hits] the biggest target market would be to combine features of the instant anti-inflammatory, DNA repair and correction of visible signs of photoaging categories all in one product. This could then appeal to those both young and old, male and female, and have both positive health and cosmetic benefits."

"Overall, people need to understand that you need to be proactive with sun care, not just reactive, in order to have long-term results," says O'Hanlon. "And even if you miss everything else, at least remember your face, neck and décolleté, and apply a good SPF each morning."

"Efficacy in the products is always number one," says Pastorkovich, and Lavian agrees, commenting, "I can bring to market the most fascinating, innovative product, but if it doesn't work or no one needs it, it's not going to go anywhere." ■ GCI



ABBY PENNING is associate editor of *GCI* magazine. She previously was the assistant editor for *Skin Inc.* magazine, where she won a silver FOLIO: Eddie award in 2009.

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