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Save Your Skin From Sunburn This Spring and Summer

Can this sunny homeopathic remedy prevent sunburn?

by ROBERT J. SIGNORE, DO

As a clinical dermatologist who has practiced in the Chicago area for 27 years, I have found classical homeopathic medicine useful in helping my patients heal from skin diseases. I like to explain that homeopathy can often help patients reduce their use of steroids and antibiotics (which are frequently employed in the conventional treatment of skin conditions).

The five skin conditions with which I have the greatest success using homeopathic medicine are acne (pimples), warts (common warts and plantar warts), *moluscum contagiosum*, atopic eczema, and hyperhidrosis (excessive sweating). I use the classical homeopathic method, which involves taking a lengthy history and repertorizing the case to find the most similar homeopathic remedy, also known as the *simillimum*. This is the approach used by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy. Because these five skin diseases are chronic, I usually try to find the patient's constitutional (or "chronic") remedy.

Isopathy and the sun

Today, however, I want to share with you a different but related approach that I've used to address one skin condition: the isopathic use of a homeopathically prepared remedy, *Sol*, to help prevent sunburns. *Isopathy* is defined by *Yasgur's Homeopathic Dictionary* as "the employment of homeopathically prepared substances responsible for the disease itself. It is not based on the principle of *similarity* but on *sameness*, on the substance being identical to the etiological agent, e.g. the use of pollens in allergic asthma." The word *sol*

means "sun" in Latin, and this remedy is manufactured by exposing powdered lactose (milk sugar) to concentrated, natural sunlight, and then processing the result as a homeopathic remedy, using the classic homeopathic pharmacy methods of serial dilution and succussion.

I have found *Sol* to be a good remedy for keeping me from becoming sunburned in high-risk situations, such as being at the beach or bicycling on a clear, sunny day. In fact, my family and I take *Sol* 30c—one pellet dissolved in the mouth daily—beginning one day before the start of our summer vacation and throughout our trip. Of course, we still use natural zinc oxide sunscreens, hats, and protective clothing while outdoors.

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Using the remedy *Sol* to prevent sunburns is similar in principle to using the homeopathic remedy *Rhus toxicodendron* (made from highly diluted tincture of poison ivy leaves) to help prevent poison ivy dermatitis. You may recall the article I wrote on that subject in the Spring 2017 issue of *Homeopathy Today*: "Poison Ivy Prevention, Here's How to Ditch the Itch."

Chance meeting, fascinating insight

Here's how I found out about the sunny *Sol* remedy, which saves skin from summer's scorching sunburns. In 2013, I attended the 8th Annual Joint American Homeopathic

Conference of the National Center for Homeopathy in Reston, Virginia. At the lunch lecture, I had the good fortune to sit next to two experienced homeopathic pharmacists: father and son Steven and Lee Kayne, of Freeman's Homeopathic Pharmacy in Scotland. Upon learning that I was a dermatologist, they suggested I might want to know about the homeopathic remedy *Sol* because it could be useful in my practice. I had never heard of it but was immediately intrigued. They informed me that the remedy was available through their pharmacy.¹

Later, I investigated *Sol* online. In an article on the British Homeopathic Association website, "First Aid for Your Holidays," Steven Kayne explains how *Sol* can be

used preventatively because it is "particularly useful for people who suffer from exposure to the sun."² I also found that in New Zealand, the homeopathic remedy *Sol* is being used to prevent sunburns in fair-skinned people.³ It turns out that New Zealanders even use *Sol* in their pets' drinking water to prevent sunburns in dogs and horses.⁴ In fact, the late British homeopath Andrew Lockie, MD, suggested that homeopathic *Sol* could even be used as a preventative for solar keratoses (precancerous skin lesions). He wrote, "If you are fair-skinned and about to take a holiday in the sun, take *Sol* 30c as a preventative; correct

dosage is three times daily for three weeks out of four while exposed to the sun.”⁵

Personal experience with Sol

Several years ago, my wife, daughter, and I went on vacation to sunny Arizona. For one day prior to our trip and every day while in Arizona, we each dissolved one pellet of Sol 30c under our tongues in addition to applying sunscreen. Happily, none of us got sunburned, despite hiking in the blazing, noontday Arizona sun for one hour at 105°F.

This was one of our first times using Sol 30c, and I mentioned to my family that we couldn't really tell whether it was the Sol or the sunscreen that had prevented us from scorching in the sun. Then, my fair-skinned daughter confessed that she had only applied sunscreen on her face—not on her arms and legs. She was wearing short sleeves and short pants, so it must have been the Sol that kept her from getting painfully sunburned, we reasoned. I thanked her for her honesty. Her experience gave more credence to the theory that homeopathic Sol could be a useful tool for keeping people from getting the ubiquitous pain, redness, and blisters from too much sun exposure that often ruins one's summer fun. After all, dermatologists have always wanted to find a safe, simple pill to prevent sunburns. You could say that finding an "anti-sunburn pill" has been the Holy Grail of dermatology.

A pilot study

Since then, my family and I have continued to use Sol 30c for sunburn prevention every summer vacation with anecdotal



Too Much Sun?

5 FABULOUS WAYS TO SOOTHE YOUR SUNBURN

When you plan to be out in the spring or summer sun for more than a little while, it's best to protect your skin from sunburn by wearing a wide-brimmed hat, protective clothing, and sunscreen with zinc oxide or titanium oxide as active ingredients. But what about those times when you or a loved one is caught off guard by the strength of the sun? Or, you're enjoying yourself so much that you stay outside longer than anticipated?

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Sunburn happens! And when it does, consider these top 5 homeopathic remedies to soothe your burnt skin:

- 1. Sol.** The top remedy for sunburn, to soothe it or prevent it.
- 2. Belladonna.** The sunburned skin is red and hot to the touch.
- 3. Cantharis.** Blisters form with the sunburn.
- 4. Apis mellifica.** Stinging is prominent, and sunburned skin may be puffy.
- 5. Sulphur.** The sunburned skin is itchy.

.....
Many thanks to Vikas Sharma, MD, and his excellent website, drhomeo.com, where he recommends the above five remedies for acute sunburn. Visit www.drhomeo.com/homeopathic-treatment/homeopathic-treatment-sunburn for more information.



Because homeopathic *Sol* appeared to help prevent or lessen sunburns in two of our three volunteers, we proposed a larger study to further investigate homeopathic *Sol* for sunburn prevention.

success. But, I wanted to scientifically evaluate our hypothesis that homeopathic *Sol* could prevent or reduce the incidence of sunburns. So, two dermatology colleagues and I decided to evaluate whether taking homeopathic *Sol* by mouth prior to ultraviolet (UV) B exposure would help prevent us from getting sunburned. We used the following method:

1. Determine the baseline UVB amount it would take for each one of us to experience slight sunburn on a tiny area on our backs (prior to taking *Sol*). We used a standard amount of UV exposure, based on established parameters in dermatology for a person's skin tanning type. So, those with darker skin would be given more millijoules of UV light than those with lighter skin.
2. Take homeopathic *Sol* 30c, one pill dissolved in the mouth daily for seven days.
3. Repeat step 1 to see whether taking *Sol* would be associated with a higher amount of UVB required to experience the same slight sunburn. (If so, then it would be suggestive of a protective effect of the homeopathic remedy.)

Here's what we found:

Colleague 1 was able to withstand a higher dose of UVB after she took the remedy *Sol* (interpretation: *protective* effect from homeopathic *Sol*).

Colleague 2 sunburned at the same dose of UVB before and after taking *Sol*. However, after taking *Sol*, he experienced less redness than before (interpretation: *inconclusive* result; it seemed to help a little, but we couldn't be sure).

When my own skin was exposed

to UVB at the established standard for someone with my moderately olive, tanning type III skin, I did not experience a sunburn, so no baseline could be determined. One week later, I repeated the UVB challenge at a higher dose than before. Still, I did not experience any sunburn. So, after two attempts to burn me, we couldn't do it, even at 550 millijoules of narrowband UVB, which is sufficient to burn the average tanning type III person. Then, I realized that seven weeks earlier I had briefly taken homeopathic *Sol* 30c each day during my one-week summer vacation. Could homeopathic *Sol*, taken almost two months before my current UVB experiments, somehow have protected me from burning? We thought it was possible. We decided against any more UVB testing on me at that point.

Note: No one experienced any adverse effects from taking homeopathic *Sol*.

Because homeopathic *Sol* appeared to help prevent or lessen sunburns in two of our three volunteers, we proposed a larger study to further investigate homeopathic *Sol* for sunburn prevention. We applied for institutional review board approval, but our clinical study was denied. We made the suggested revisions, but our larger study was again denied.

The verdict

I cannot say with scientific certainty that homeopathic *Sol* prevents sunburns, but I can say that, based on our small pilot study and six years of personal experience with it, this remedy certainly seems to help prevent sunburns. I've not seen any adverse effects from it, either. Other advantages of *Sol* include its low cost

(about \$12.00 for a 7-gram bottle), convenience (easy to take by mouth), pleasant taste, and ease of packing when traveling. *Note: I believe it is also important to use natural sunscreens containing zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide and to use sun-protective clothing while outdoors, regardless of whether you are taking homeopathic *Sol* for sunburn prevention.*

It is my hope that this article will encourage other researchers to conduct clinical studies on homeopathic *Sol* for the prevention of sunburn and cutaneous sun damage.

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