

Healthy habits reduce the w

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STAFF WRITER

Some of those wrinkles or future wrinkles on your face are out of your control.

They are a natural effect of skin thinning and becoming less elastic with age.

But you can take action to reduce some of the other causes of facial lines and crinkles.

Avoid UV light

Ultraviolet light from the sun or a tanning bed speeds up skin aging and is the biggest cause of wrinkles at younger ages. The UV light breaks down the connective tissue in your deeper layer of skin, causing early sagging and creasing.

Yes, this is true even now in a northern climate like Rochester's.

"UV radiation pierces through the clouds," says Dr. William Koenig, a plastic

surgeon at Quate-la Center for Plastic Surgery in Rochester. Koenig estimates that sun

and smoking rank about 8 on a scale with 10 being the most significant in aging the skin. By contrast, over-the-counter facial creams can minimize wrinkles, but they are only about a 2 on the same scale.

Tanning booths, which concentrate UVA exposure, are worse than the sun for destroying elastic fibers in the skin, says Koenig. The damage, visible microscopically, leads quickly to wrinkles and loose-hanging skin, he said.

Many adults have already sustained a lot of damage from ultraviolet exposure in their younger years, says Dr. Thomas McMeekin, a dermatologist at Genesee Valley Laser Centre in Brighton. But, "It's never too late to start using sunscreen," adds McMeekin, who's also a clinical professor of dermatology, medicine and pediatrics at Univer-



Koenig



McMeekin

sity of Rochester Medical Center.

Ann Marie Ebling, a nurse practitioner at

Dermatology Associates of Rochester in Brighton, finds that darker-skinned patients, including Italians, Hispanics and African-Americans, mistakenly believe they don't have to worry about the sun.

"Everyone should be wearing sunscreen every day," says Ebling, who wears moisturizer daily that contains sun



Ebling

protection factor 30. Darker-skinned people might do fine with a level 15, while lighter-skinned people should use level 30, she adds.

Don't assume makeup containing sunscreen is enough, since you'd need to use about a tablespoon of makeup to get the listed level of protection.



Pamper your skin to prevent damage and wrinkles.

TRACY COX
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Watch that sun

The National Institutes of Health recommends these steps to protect your skin daily from damaging ultraviolet radiation.

- Reduce sun exposure and protect your skin from the sun.
- Wear protective clothing such as hats, long-sleeved shirts, long skirts or pants.
- Try to avoid sun exposure during midday, when ultraviolet light is most intense.
- Use high-quality sunscreens, preferably with SPF (sun protection factor) ratings of at least 15. Pick a sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB light.
- Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going out into the sun, and reapply frequently.
- Use sunscreen year-round, including in the winter.