

Outdoors health tips from the posse

Getting along with the sun

BY MARK RACKAY

That glowing orange ball above us during the day is the center of our solar system. The Sun is 2,713,406 miles in diameter and it would take 109 earths put together to reach around it. The core temperature of the Sun can exceed 27 million degrees Fahrenheit.

The sun is over 92 million miles away from us, but the light it produces reaches us in 8 minutes and 20 seconds. No wonder it is still so hot when the light reaches us.

Modern man, Homo sapiens specie, has been in existence for just about 200 thousand years. You would think that in all the time man has been around, we would have figured out sunburn, making it a thing of the past, but such is not the case. Everyone still gets burnt on a regular basis.

The sun emits ultraviolet radiation. There are 3 types of ultraviolet radiation, UV-A, UV-B and UV-C. It's the UV-A rays that give us the sunburns, as they penetrate the skin the deepest. UV-A rays are also bad for your eyes and pass through glass, so even when driving you can get a burn.

The sun does do some very good things for us. For example, the sun provides us with Vitamin D. It is absorbed through the skin and converted to a state we can use. Vitamin D is involved in the use of calcium in the body and is important for the maintenance and creation of bones. It requires about 30 minutes exposure to sunlight daily to fill that need.

Many studies have linked depression with a lack of sunlight. In areas where the sun disappears for months during the winter, people use lamps to create the light spectrum of the sun to alleviate symptoms of depression. Sunlight stimulates the pineal gland in your brain. This gland regulates your sleep and wake cycles and triggers our bodies to activity or restful sleep.

The downside to sunlight is sunburn. Seems that after a wonderful day in the outdoors, where every-



(Photo by Mark Rackay)

thing went just great, you still have old Mr. Murphy along. For me, it is usually because I forgot to use any sunscreen, and will get to spend several days dealing with a bad burn.

Sunburns usually take a full 12 hours in order for you to feel the full fire. Mild sunburns leave your skin hot, red and sore. Sometimes small blisters may appear but the pain usually subsides in 24 to 36 hours.

More severe sunburns can cause headaches, fever, chills and vomiting, and the soreness can last for days. I have had a few of those burns during my fishing days in the Florida Keys. The sun reflects off the water, getting you from both directions. While bad sunburns are not usually fatal, they sure hurt like the dickens.

We have all been preached to about wearing a hat and using a sunscreen. The sunscreen is just a message that never hits home with

me. I never remember to bring it, or when I do bring it, I never remember to use it. I no longer waste money on sunscreens, since I won't use it anyway. I invest in topical ointments for the burn such as those containing Aloe Vera and ibuprofen pills for the inflammation.

Seriously, it is better to use sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. It must be reapplied every few hours, and more often if you perspire or get wet from rain or swimming.

The strength of the UV rays intensifies by 5 percent for every 1,000 feet of altitude above 5,000 feet. If you are up in the high country you must be extra careful.

In a survival situation, many people and animals coat themselves in mud to ward off the effects of the sun. When the mud dries out and cracks off, it leaves behind a residue that also blocks UV rays from the skin. The wilderness mud bath is

something that never really appealed to me.

Aspen trees also provide a natural sun block. The white powder found on their trunks has an SPF factor of 5, which can serve as a sun block. Use your hands to remove the powder from the tree and rub over exposed parts of your skin. Since the SPF is so low, it will need to be reapplied frequently but you can scrape off the powder and save it up for use later.

It is best to wear your sunglasses, wide brimmed hat, and paste yourself up with a generous lather of sunscreen to prevent sunburn. In my case, I will continue to buy sunburn cream futures.

Mark Rackay is a freelance writer who serves as a director and spokesman for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcsposse.org ●



Local. Simple.

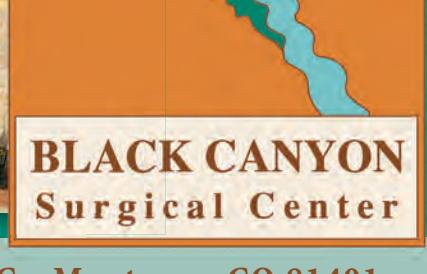
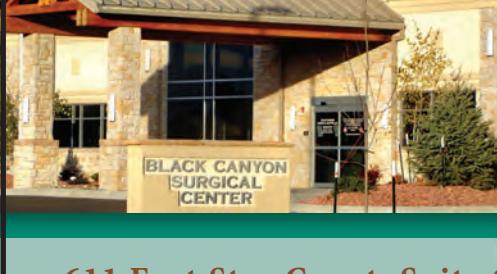
The best outcomes and the best value for outpatient and elective surgery.

In 2006 the Black Canyon Surgical Center was created by local surgeons to provide the best outpatient and elective surgical services in the area.

Our team is comprised of extremely experienced staff who specialize in the procedures we host, and the state of the art equipment we use.

With combined efforts of our care team and local surgeons, we provide services that continually receive the highest patient satisfaction rates, and the lowest rate of infection.

Ask your surgeon to make sure your upcoming procedure is scheduled at the Black Canyon Surgical Center.



611 East Star Court, Suite C • Montrose, CO 81401
(970) 249-6842

blackcanyonsurgicalcenter.com



RIVER VALLEY
FAMILY HEALTH CENTER

Medical Services | Dental and Dental Hygiene

at our **NEW Location** opening in *Delta* late September





ACCEPTING
New Patients
In the Olathe Health Center

Dr. Rafanelli

Call TODAY to
make an appointment

WE ACCEPT:

- MEDICARE
- MEDICAID
- INSURED
- UNINSURED
- CICP
- CHP+

We also offer discounted medical services on a sliding fee scale for qualifying patients.

OLATHE 970.323.6141

P.O. Box 529 | 308 Main Street | Olathe, CO 81425

MONTROSE 970.497.3333

100 Tessitore Court, Suite B | Montrose, CO 81401

Delta 970.874.8981

107 West 11th | Delta, CO 81416