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## Caffeine Protects Skin Against UV Damage, Acts As a Sunscreen

By Charlotte LoBuono

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Scientists have recently found evidence to support their theory about how caffeine reverses the ultraviolet (UV) light-induced damage linked to non-melanoma skin cancers. Researchers at Rutgers University in Piscataway, New Jersey and the University of Washington in Seattle created mice that had decreased levels of the enzyme ATR in their skin. They exposed these so-called "transgenic" mice to UV light and found that, compared to their normal littermates, their lack of ATR inhibited the development of UV-induced skin cancer.

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In a recent issue of the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology*, researchers from the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences reported that transgenic mice lacking ATR showed a 50% reduction in the number of skin cancers following UV exposure. The researchers also found that regular caffeine consumption in mice led to a 50% reduction in the number of skin cancers.

No, you do not need to smear yourself with Diet Coke. Some sunscreens on the market have caffeine in the formula. Jeannette Graf, an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai Medical Center, recommends **SkinMedica Environmental Defense Sunscreen SPF 50+**, \$45.00, [skinmedica.com](http://skinmedica.com).

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