

New sunscreen guide creates controversy

By Karen Ravn, Special to the Los Angeles Times

It's a conundrum. You want to have fun in the sun, but you don't want skin cancer or – heaven forbid! – wrinkles. Maybe you think you have it made in the shade with sunscreen. But while most sun and skin experts would advise you to slather the stuff on like crazy, many also would warn you not to rely on it too, too much.

In May, the Environmental Working Group, or EWG, a nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C., concerned with health and the environment, released its annual Sunscreen Safety Guide. It comes down in favor of using sunscreens, but it also raises concerns, which, in turn have raised some controversy.

“It's frustrating,” says Dr. Darrell Rigel, a professor of dermatology at New York University, who believes the EWG may weigh environmental concerns too heavily in its work. “People don't wear sunscreen because it's environmentally friendly. They wear it to protect themselves from cancer. ... The danger is that people will be confused and not use any.”

A look at some of the EWG claims may shed a little light.

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