

BEAUTY

Innovation: The Morning-After Sunscreen



It's the ultimate second chance for accidental sun abusers: a topical cream that claims to negate the cancer-causing damage created by careless UV exposure. While the formula was still awaiting its official brand name and approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration at press time, the buzz among doctors and researchers about this "morning-after sunscreen," created by a private U.S. biotechnology company called Applied Genetics Incorporated Dermatics, is that its approval is imminent.

Skin-cancer specialists like Darrell Rigel, MD, a clinical professor of dermatology at New York University Medical Center, are excited about the prescription-only treatment's potential. "The cream contains an enzyme called T4-endonuclease, which repairs DNA damaged by UV rays and therefore can literally eliminate long-term risks and side effects, including cancer," Rigel explains. That would make it an emergency fix for anyone at high risk for melanoma who makes the mistake of getting too much sun. (Risk factors include fair skin and hair, a family history of skin cancer, or sunburns at a young age.)

The downside? Possible misuse by the tanning-salon industry, which might tout it as a panacea for customers.

—Michele Bender is a contributing editor to *Health*.

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