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How putting coffee in sunscreen 'may ward off skin cancer and wrinkles'

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

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A sunscreen based on caffeine could help you tan safely, scientists believe.

They say that sun cream made from coffee, chocolate or tea may protect against the most common form of skin cancer, while producing a bronzed glow.

If that wasn't enough, it may also keep wrinkles at bay.



Discovery: The latest scientific revelation reveals that sun cream made from coffee may protect against certain forms of skin cancer

The appealing thought comes from American scientists who have shown that caffeine triggers the death of UV-damaged cells, while leaving healthy ones unharmed.

To test the idea that caffeine provides protection by interfering with a skin protein called ATR, they genetically-engineered mice so that they made much less ATR than usual.

The animals and normal mice were then put under UV lamps.

Those low in ATR took longer to develop skin cancers.

After 19 weeks, the GM mice had 70 per cent fewer tumours and the cancers they did develop were far less likely to have penetrated the skin, allowing them to use the bloodstream to spread through the body.

The researchers, from Rutgers University in New Jersey, said that cells need ATR to repair damage and if there isn't enough of it, they self-destruct, nipping any cancer in the bud.

Caffeine lowers levels of ATR, pushing UV-damaged cells towards suicide.

The finding explains previous studies which credited drinking caffeinated – but not decaffeinated - tea and coffee with warding off non-melanoma skin cancer.



Caffeine lowers levels of the skin protein ATR, pushing UV-damaged cells towards suicide

In the biggest study, involving 93,676 women, each daily cup of caffeinated coffee cut the odds of this form of skin cancer by some 5 per cent.

This means that six cups a day would reduce the risk of the disease by almost a third.

Around 100,000 cases of this type of non-melanoma skin cancer are diagnosed every year but is much more easily treated than the less common but more deadly malignant melanoma skin cancer.

Despite their results, the researchers say that people shouldn't start consuming vast amounts of tea or coffee just so that they can lie out in the sun.

But they say their finding could be used to create a caffeine-based sun cream.

As an added bonus, caffeine absorbs UV light – stopping it from damaging and wrinkling the skin. It may also provide a bronzed look.

Professor Dot Bennett, of St George's, University of London, said: 'Caffeine lotion might promote tanning a little, since this family of molecules stimulates pigment cells to make more pigment.'

However, she cautioned that it remains unclear what effect, if any, such a sunscreen would have against the more deadly malignant melanoma form of skin cancer.

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