



## Newsmax health

# 10 Drugs That Cause Sun Sensitivity

Lynn Allison July 26, 2016



If you develop a rash or experience uncomfortable redness on your skin after a day in the sun, your medication may be to blame. Experts say certain drugs increase your skin's sensitivity to the sun which can cause cell damage as well as an unsightly appearance.

"These skin reactions are caused by the sun's UVA and UVB wavelengths that trigger photo biological reactions to medication that are mainly free radical in nature. The free radicals and oxidative stress contribute to damage skin cells causing redness and rashes in sun exposed areas," Dr. Kally Papantoniou, a cosmetic dermatologist and clinical instructor at Mount Sinai Health Center in New York City, tells *Newsmax Health*.

"Studies have shown that certain medications may induce photosensitivity and you need to be super careful with skin care when you are exposed to the sun when taking these drugs."

Here are some common culprits:



**Diuretics.** Medications to control high blood pressure and help reduce water retention such as hydrochlorothiazide, bumetanide and furosemide do sensitize the skin to El Sol through a photochemical activity. “Sub-acute lupus like rashes can occur in photo exposed areas,” says Papantoniou. “Sunscreen is important to prevent photodermatitis also known as sun poisoning. Spend more time indoors if your skin is particularly sensitive.”

**Antibiotics.** Doxycycline and tetracycline are two examples of antibiotics commonly used in acne treatment that may also cause phototoxicity when the skin is exposed to the sun. To avoid a potentially nasty reaction, wear sunscreen and avoid prolonged exposure to the sun.

**Terbinafine.** This popular anti-fungal medication — brand name: Lamisil — is commonly prescribed to treat nail fungus. It can also make the skin extremely sensitive to the sun. The same skin protecting advice applies.

**Statins.** Lovastatin and simvastatin, two commonly prescribed statin drugs used to lower blood cholesterol levels, can make the skin more sensitive to UVA and UVB damage. Photoprotection must be done daily, says the expert.

**Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories.** NSAIDs — such as naproxen, ibuprofen, and ketoprofen — produce damaging free radicals when the skin is exposed to the sun. “Since these are so commonly used, we mustn’t forget to use sunscreen,” says Papantoniou.

**Hypoglycemic agents.** Glipizide, glyburide, and sulfonylureas are typical drugs used to control blood sugar levels in diabetics. These medicines also make the skin more sensitive to UV rays.

**Antipsychotic medications.** Drugs like chlorpromazine and other phenothiazines that are antipsychotic medications cause photosensitivity through an oxidation process. To avoid skin damage, wear sunscreen.

**Systemic retinoids.** Drugs like isotretinoin and acetretin are systemic retinoids used to treat skin conditions like acne and psoriasis. It is best to use sunscreen and take necessary precautions so avoid skin sensitivity when using these drugs.

**Anti-aging creams.** Dr. Anthony Youn, author of “The Age Fix,” tells *Newsmax Health* that the extremely popular anti-aging creams that contain retinol, the over-the-counter version and tretinoin, the prescription-strength form, both can increase sensitivity of the skin to the sun’s rays.

“For this reason, if you are using either of these products, discontinue them approximately a week prior to major sun exposure — like a beach trip — to limit your risk,” he advises. “If you do continue to apply these products, then definitely use a broad-spectrum sun block containing titanium oxide or zinc oxide



to protect your skin against sensitivity and UV radiation.”

**Alpha-hydroxy acids.** Youn says that although these formulations are not as intense as the retinols, AHAs can also increase skin sensitivity. “Most people don’t need to discontinue AHA’s prior to skin exposure but use a broad spectrum sun block with at least an SPF30 every morning and reapply every two hours,” he adds.

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