

## **Summer Rashes**

Summer is here in the Lowcountry – and the heat is at full blast. While this is the time of year to relax and enjoy the outdoors, intense sunlight and hot, humid temperatures can lead to skin irritation.

### **Q: I've heard that some prescription drug cans cause a reaction with sun exposure. Is this true?**

**A:** Yes, this type of rash is Photoallergic Dermatitis. Drug-Induced Photosensitivity is the medical term for rashes endured by adults on blood pressure medication, some antibiotics along with anti-acne products, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, birth control pills and antihistamines. If you are taking any of these prescription drugs, you should limit your exposure to direct sunlight.

### **Q. How do I know if I have heat rash? What does it look like?**

**A.** Heat rash is characterized by small reddish blisters appearing on the skin. This rash will be extremely itchy. Typically, you'll find this in skin folds or wherever clothing causes friction. To minimize the impact of this type of sun rash, simply limit the amount of time you spend in the sun or at the very least use sun screen.

### **Q: What causes heat rash?**

**A:** Heat rash happens when the body gets too hot and can't evaporate sweat fast enough. The sweat ducts become plugged and trap perspiration beneath the skin.

### **Q: How long does heat rash last and is there anything I can do to relieve the itchiness and discomfort?**

**A:** Heat rash usually goes away on its own in a few days and can be treated at home. Severe forms of heat rash may need medical care, but the best way to relieve symptoms is to cool your skin, avoid sweating, and apply cold water compresses, calamine lotion or over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream.

### **Q. What is prickly heat?**

**A.** Prickly Heat, known as Miliaria is caused by a combination of heat and humidity, which block the tiny openings (pores) in your skin causing the eruption of tiny reddish papules causing a prickling sensation

### **Q. What can I do to avoid summer rashes?**

**A.** A few things you can do to help prevent rashes are to avoid tight fitting clothing, stay in the shade or air conditioning when it becomes excessively hot, keep your bedroom cool when sleeping, bathe in cool water with a non-drying soap and avoid using creams or ointments that may block the skin's pores.

### **Q. What should I do if I get a rash?**

**A:** The best way to treat any rash is to try not to scratch it. However tempting it may be and however itchy the rash is, scratching it can cause the rash to become infected. If you do end up with an infection you may need to see a physician who will prescribe antibiotics to clear it up.

Summer rashes can be frustrating, itchy, and sometimes hard to get rid of. If you find yourself with a rash that is not healing promptly, call Dermatology Associates of the Lowcountry at (843)

689-5259 on Hilton Head Island or 843-705-0840 in Bluffton / Okatie. Our experienced staff will identify the exact rash and provide the proper treatment.