

BEAUTY



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CAN'T STAY AWAY
FROM THE RAYS.
VANESSA PENNA
SEARCHES FOR A
WAY TO MAKE SUN
WORSHIPING A
LITTLE LESS UNHOLY

THE PRODIGAL

If you want to come home from your next vacation with a tan and no guilty feelings, make sure your travel companion isn't dating a dermatologist. My friend was easy to spot on the beach. There she was: under an umbrella, her Tic Tac-white skin protected by a floppy hat, wrap-around sunglasses, some god-awful muumuu cover-up thing, and a thick, chalky layer of SPF 45. Clearly she'd read every anti-sun article ever published—and taken some serious notes.

If only we could all be so disciplined. While we know the sun can have damaging, even lethal, effects on our bodies, most of us, including myself, still crave a savage—oops, I mean—*slight* tan. So I've often wondered: Isn't it possible to get just the teeniest bit of sun, without feeling like a criminal or suffering dire repercussions?

The sun gods must have heard my prayers, because it seems some dermatologists are relaxing their violent opposition to sun exposure of any kind. Michael F. Holick, MD, a professor of dermatology and director of the General Clinical Research Center at Boston University, says,

"Telling patients to stay out of the sun at all costs is not only unreasonable, it's unhealthy. Sunlight is critically important for vitamin D levels and bone health." Debra Jaliman, MD, clinical instructor at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City, adds, "If I go overboard with a 'sun is evil' lecture, patients will ignore me altogether. I know people like the look of a tan, so if they insist on getting sun, I tell them the safest way to go about it."

But there may be a more emotional reason we crave some color. There's no doubt that we all step livelier once summer begins, and Dr. Holick says that this isn't just because we're days closer to our next beach vacation. He explains that the UV rays in sunlight have been shown to stimulate the body to produce beta-endorphins—a substance in the brain thought to create feelings of well-being. Chemistry aside, having a tan just makes most people feel more attractive and healthy. Patricia Wexler, MD, associate professor of dermatology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City, says, "A tan is sexy in our culture. And I think it's become like >

