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ASK IVANA

The natural vs. imitation dilemma

By Ivana Tavernese



Most people don't like imitations; they want the real thing. This is often the case with fat-free food, knock-off designer clothing, and suntans. However, one factor or another usually plays a part in steering us towards the necessity of the imitation. Whether it's high cholesterol leading us to leaner diets, tight budgets prohibiting a Louis Vuitton splurge or office work keeping us away from the sun. But when it comes to the latter, is the imitation tan better than the real thing?



Aging of the skin, skin cancer, yellowing of the skin, and blotchiness are some of the cons that come with tanning. (Comstock)

"Yes," says Dr. John Goldhar, director of CosMedix MD Centre for Dermatology. "The underlying questions are how much Vitamin D do we need? What are the benefits versus the liability of the tan?" Dr. Goldhar goes on to explain that brief exposure to the sun is often enough for a healthy Vitamin D intake. "The benefit is the look, which we still have ingrained in our head that a tan looks great. The cons against actual [sun] tanning, is aging of the skin, skin cancer, yellowing of the skin, and blotchiness."

To achieve a UV-free tan there are several options on the market place. The most cost effective approach is a self-tanning lotion. Most of these lotions offer a slight change in skin's appearance. *Dove Energy Glow* and *Aveeno Continuous Radiance* claim to subtly enhance skin's colour. For many people, this is enough. For those seeking a bit more of a change, there are more potent self-tanners including *Neutrogena's Build-a-Tan Gradual Sunless Tanning Lotion*. This product offers colour with each application.

For those who are looking for a quick fix, whether it's prom, a wedding, a hot date, or just a regular Saturday night, spray tanning offers the fastest results. One of the spray tanning options is Mystic Tan, which is a tanning process that utilizes MagneTan technology. When the Mystic Tan solution passes through the booth's nozzles, the solution's particles are polarized, like tiny magnets attracting to all surfaces of the skin. The result is a uniform, natural-looking tan in less than five minutes.

The Mystic Tan™ tanning solution has three components:

1. The bronzer is a water-soluble dye designed to produce an instant tan. The brown bronzer will wash off in the shower or bath but will not affect your overall tan.
2. The DHA produces a long-term tan. When applied to the skin, DHA reacts with proteins in the skin's superficial layer to form a golden brown colour. It begins to darken two to three hours after application and reaches its peak colour within 24 hours. The DHA tan will begin to gradually fade through natural exfoliation, just like a tan from the sun. To maintain optimal colour, you should tan every four to five days.
3. The Aloe Vera helps to carry the DHA deeper into the skin and promotes a softer, smoother finish. The Mystic Tan™ tanning solution contains more than 65% stabilized Aloe Vera liquid. Aloe Vera is a

Editor's choice

Beauty

- ▣ Sephora
- ▣ LUSH
- ▣ Cake
- ▣ MAC Cosmetics
- ▣ Dove
- ▣ L'Oreal Paris Canada
- ▣ Dior
- ▣ Cargo Cosmetics
- ▣ The Body Shop

Shopping

- ▣ Urban Outfitters
- ▣ Aritzia
- ▣ Browns Shoes
- ▣ Birks
- ▣ H & M
- ▣ Holt Renfrew
- ▣ Zara



natural moisturizer that helps the skin draw moisture to the surface. It softens the skin and helps smooth wrinkles.

Mystic Tan's website suggests using a water-based moisturizer before tanning to help absorb the solution, and continue to use after the spray tan to help maintain colour. However, do not apply any moisturizers or lotions to the skin right after tanning until the DHA has had time to set, which usually takes four to six hours. Certain types of moisturizers or lotions applied during this period could cause streaking of the DHA.

Also, you should not swim or shower for a minimum of four hours after tanning in the Mystic Tan booth. Swimming in chlorinated water at any time can bleach the Mystic Tan and possibly cause streaking.

Once you have towel dried there is little chance of the bronzer or DHA getting on your clothes. If you pursue any strenuous physical activity after your Mystic Tan tanning session, perspiration may cause some of the bronzer to transfer to your clothing. Since the bronzer is completely water-soluble it will wash out.

Sun-less tanning options are safe ways to give skin some added colour in the summer. However, as the *Dove Energy Glow* lotion carefully warns on the label: "This product does not contain sunscreen and does not protect against sunburn. Repeated exposure of unprotected skin while tanning may increase the risk of skin aging, skin cancer and other harmful effects to the skin even if you do not burn."

Just like most things in life, too much of a good thing, especially the real thing, can hurt.

This story was posted on Fri, May 18, 2007