



## **DHA SPRAY TANNING: THE FACTS**

Approved by the FDA as a cosmetic skin-coloring agent since 1977, DHA (dihydroxyacetone) is the main active ingredient in self-tanning cosmetics. Its usage has peaked as a complement to UV tanning services in recent years. Because more and more sunbed users are also using DHA spray tanning as part of an active skin-care regimen, here are some answers to commonly asked questions about DHA.

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### **■ What is DHA?**

DHA is simply a carbohydrate (sugar) compound used in many cosmetics. Often derived from a vegetable source like beets or sugar cane, its properties as a skin darkener were first discovered in the 1920s but weren't marketed until the 1960s. It is approved by the U.S. FDA and recommended by the Canadian Health Ministry for usage in externally applied sunless tanning products.

### **■ How Does It Work?**

DHA is a colorless sugar that interacts with the dead cells on the skin's surface to darken it over a period of several hours. Many self-tanning products also include immediate cosmetic bronzers to produce an immediate darkening. Unlike a UV-induced suntan, in which melanin in live skin cells turns brown to protect cells from sunburn, a DHA tan is a cosmetic browning that does not protect the skin from sunburn.

### **■ What About Spray Tanning?**

The FDA has approved DHA for external application to your skin. For spray applications, whether at a salon or in using an over-the-counter self-spray product, FDA recommends you take protective measures to eliminate eye contact, inhalation or ingestion during your spray tan session, such as:

- Using protective eyewear
- Sealing lips with lip balm
- Wearing nose filters
- Using protective undergarments