

Sun/UV Safety

Ultraviolet (UV) radiation is part of the electromagnetic (light) spectrum that reaches the earth from the sun. It has wavelengths shorter than visible light, making it invisible to the unassisted human eye.

Up to 95 percent of the UV radiation reaching the Earth's surface is classified as UVA (long wave). UVA has a balanced intensity during all daylight hours throughout the year, and can penetrate clouds and glass. Most people have a large lifetime exposure to UVA radiation.

UVA is the main source of skin tanning. Tanning, whether outdoors or in a salon, causes cumulative damage over time. A tan results from injury to the skin's DNA; the skin darkens in an imperfect attempt to prevent further DNA damage. These imperfections, (mutations), can lead to skin cancer.

Tanning booths primarily emit UVA. The high-powered tanning lamps used in tanning salons administer doses of UVA as much as 12 times that of the sun. Not surprisingly, people who use tanning salons are 2.5 times more likely to develop squamous cell carcinoma, and 1.5 times more likely to develop basal cell carcinoma. According to recent research, first exposure to tanning beds in youth increases melanoma risk by 75 percent.

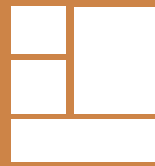
Simple Rules to Protect your Family from Sunburns:

- Limit your sun exposure between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm (when UV rays are strongest).
- Keep babies younger than 6 months out of direct sunlight. Find shade under a tree, an umbrella, or the stroller canopy. The FDA reports the best approach is to keep infants under 6 months out of the sun.
- When possible, dress yourself and your children in cool, comfortable clothing that covers the body, such as lightweight cotton pants, long-sleeved shirts, and hats.
- Select clothes made with a tight weave; they protect better than clothes with a looser weave. If you're not sure how tight a fabric's weave is, hold it up to see how much light shines through. The less light, the better. You can also look for protective clothing labeled with an Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) rating. It indicates how much UV radiation can penetrate the fabric.
- Wear a hat with an all-around wide brim to provide as much shade as possible, shielding the face, ears, and back of the neck.
- Wear sunglasses that have at least 99% UV protection. Sunglasses with UV protection are also recommended for children.
- Educate your family to protect their skin and eyes. Remember to set a good example by practicing sun safety yourself.
- Use sunscreen.

What does SPF (Sun Protective Factor) mean?

Most sunscreens with an SPF (sun protective factor) of 15 or higher do an excellent job of protecting against UVB. SPF is a measure of a sunscreen's ability to prevent UVB from injuring the skin. Here's how it works: If you





unprotected skin turns red after 20 minutes of exposure, in theory using a SPF 15 prevents reddening 15 times longer (about five hours).

SPF 15 filters out approximately 93 percent of all incoming UVB rays. SPF 30 keeps out 97 percent and SPF 50 keeps out 98 percent. They are slight differences in these sunscreens, but if you are light-sensitive, or have a history of skin cancer, those extra percentages may make a difference. No sunscreen can block all UV rays.

- Regardless of the SPF, sunscreens need to be re-applied every 2 hours or immediately after swimming or excessive sweating to be effective.



How to Pick Sunscreen

- Use a sunscreen that says “broad-spectrum” on the label; that means it will screen out both UVB and UVA rays. It should be noted that because there is not an agreed upon standard for the term “broad spectrum”, such phrases on a bottle of sun screen will have discrepancies in their ability to screen UVA radiation.
- Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 (up to SPF 50). An SPF of 15 or 30 should be fine for most people. It is undetermined whether sunscreen with more than SPF 50 offers any extra protection.
- If possible, avoid the sunscreen ingredient oxybenzone due to concerns about mild hormonal properties.
- It is better to use any available sunscreen than to not use sunscreen at all.
- For sensitive areas of the body, such as the nose, cheeks, tops of the ears, and shoulders, choose a sunscreen with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide. These products may stay visible on the skin even after you rub them in.

How to Apply Sunscreen

- Use enough sunscreen to cover all exposed areas, especially the face, nose, ears, feet, hands, and even backs of the knees. Rub it in well.
- Put sunscreen on 15 to 30 minutes before going outdoors. It needs time to absorb into the skin.
- Use sunscreen any time you or your child spend time outdoors. Remember that you can get sunburn even on cloudy days because up to 80% of the sun’s UV rays can get through the clouds. Also, UV rays can bounce back from water, sand, snow, and concrete, so make sure you’re protected.
- Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours and after swimming, sweating, or drying off with a towel. Because most **people use too little sunscreen, make sure to apply a generous amount.**

Sunscreen for Babies

- **For babies younger than 6 months:** Please speak to your child’s health care provider for recommendations on appropriate sun screen. Use sunscreen on small areas of the body, such as the face, if protective clothing and shade are not available.
- **For babies older than 6 months:** Please speak to your child’s health care provider for recommendations on appropriate sun screen. Apply to all areas of the body, but be careful around the eyes. If your baby rubs sunscreen into her eyes, wipe her eyes and hands clean with a damp cloth. If the sunscreen irritates her skin, you may consider trying a different brand or sunscreen with titanium dioxide or zinc oxide. If a rash develops, talk with your child’s doctor.