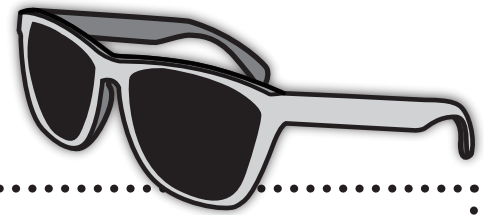




Sun Safety



Being outdoors on a beautiful day is very appealing. Just take precautions to protect your body's largest organ: your skin. The biggest concern is skin cancer caused by exposure to the sun. But the harmful rays may also cause eye problems, weaken your immune system, and give you unsightly skin spots, wrinkles, or "leathery" skin. It's not just the sun. The harmful rays also are emitted by sunlamps and tanning beds.

We recognize sunburn as a type of skin damage caused by invisible ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Tanning is also a sign of the skin reacting to potentially damaging UV radiation by producing additional pigmentation.

Everyone is potentially susceptible to the detrimental effects of exposure to UV radiation no matter what our skin color. We all need to take precautions to protect our skin. People who need to be especially careful in the sun are those who have:

- pale skin,
- blond, red, or light brown hair,
- been treated for skin cancer, and/or
- a family member who's had skin cancer.

Whether you are in the water, walking on a beach, skiing on water or snow, or just walking on a sidewalk, the sun's rays bounce off the surfaces around you.

Remember: The sun can affect your skin *any* time — not just in the summer, in warm places, or on sunny days.

If you're like most people, the sun will do almost all of its damage to your skin before your 18th birthday!

Protect Yourself

Avoid being outside when the sun is the strongest – between 10 AM and 4 PM. – even on a cloudy day. Up to 80 percent of the sun's UV rays can get through the clouds.

Stay in the shade as much as possible throughout the day.

Wear clothes that cover as much of your body as possible if you plan to be outside on a sunny day. Wear a wide-brimmed hat, long sleeves, and long pants. Consider using an umbrella for shade.

Get a good sunscreen.

Check product labels to make sure you get:

- a "sun protection factor" (SPF) of 15 or more. The higher the number, the better the protection.
- "broad spectrum" protection. It protects against UVA and UVB rays (types of light).

- water resistant sunscreen. It stays on your skin longer, even if it gets wet. "Water-resistant" does not mean "waterproof." Water-resistant sunscreens need to be reapplied as instructed on the label.

Use sunscreen the correct way!

- Apply the recommended amount evenly to all uncovered skin, especially your lips, nose, ears, neck, hands, and feet.
- Apply sunscreen 15 minutes before going out in the sun.
- If you don't have much hair, apply sunscreen to the top of your head, or wear a hat.

Too Much Sun? What to Do!

- Take a cool bath.
- Use an unscented moisturizer (lotion, no petroleum jelly).
- Use a hydrocortisone cream.
- Drink water.
- Stay out of the sun.





Sun Safety (continued)

- Reapply at least every two hours or after swimming, getting wet, sweating, or rubbing on your skin with a towel or clothes.
- Give babies and children extra care in the sun. Ask a health care professional before applying sunscreen to children under 6 months old.
- Apply sunscreen to children older than 6 months every time they go out.

Protect your eyes. Sunlight increases your risk of developing eye problems, such as cataracts. Here are other tips for eye-related sun safety.

- When buying sunglasses, look for a label that specifically offers 99 to 100 percent UV protection. This assures that the glasses block both forms of UV radiation.
- Be wary of dark or tinted eyewear sold as fashion accessories that may provide little or no protection from UV or visible light.
- Don't assume that you get more UV protection with pricier sunglasses or from glasses with a darker tint.
- Ask an eye care professional to test your sunglasses if you're not sure of their level of UV protection.
- Sunglasses that wrap all the way around the temples help prevent light from entering the sides of sunglasses.
- Children should wear real sunglasses (not toy sunglasses!) that indicate the UV protection level. Polycarbonate lenses are the most shatter-resistant.

You may choose to take medicine that stops pain. When your burn is severe and you have a headache and chills or a fever, too, you may need to go to a doctor.

Sources: U.S. Food and Drug Administration, <http://www.fda.gov>
Nemours Foundation, <http://kidshealth.org>
American Cancer Society, www.cancer.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov