



Sun Safety: Information for Parents About Sunburn & Sunscreen

Help your family have fun in the sun while avoiding harm that too much of it can cause. Some tips:



Simple rules to protect your family from sunburns:

- Keep babies younger than 6 months out of direct sunlight. Find shade under a tree, an umbrella, or the stroller canopy.
- 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. Or you can look for protective clothing labeled with an Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF).
- Wear a hat with an all-around 3-inch brim to shield the face, ears, and back of the neck.
- Limit your sun exposure between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm when UV rays are strongest.
- Wear sunglasses with at least 99% UV protection. Look for youth-sized sunglasses with UV protection for your child.
- Use sunscreen.
- Make sure everyone in your family knows how to protect his or her skin and eyes. Remember to set a good example by practicing sun safety yourself.

Sunscreen

Sunscreen can help protect the skin from sunburn and some skin cancers but only if used correctly. Keep in mind that sunscreen should be used for sun protection, not as a reason to stay in the sun longer.

How to choose a sunscreen

- Use a sunscreen that says "broad-spectrum" on the label; that means it will screen out both UVB and UVA rays.
- 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. More research studies are needed to test if sunscreen with more than SPF 50 offers any extra protection.
- If possible, avoid the sunscreen ingredient oxybenzone because of concerns about mild hormonal properties. Remember, though, that it's important to take steps to prevent sunburn, so using any sunscreen is better than not using 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, and some come in fun colors that children enjoy.

Sunscreen for babies

- **For babies younger than 6 months:** 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:** Apply to all areas of the body, but be careful around the eyes. If your baby rubs sunscreen into their eyes, wipe their eyes and hands clean with a damp cloth. If the sunscreen irritates their skin, try a different brand or sunscreen with titanium dioxide or zinc oxide. If a rash develops, talk with your child's doctor.

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Sun-Safety.aspx>