

Sun Safety Tips

Stay safe in the sun to lower your risk of skin cancer. If you do not protect your skin, the sun can harm your skin over time. Sunlight is a natural source of ultraviolet (UV) rays. Exposure to UV rays can come from natural sunlight or man-made sources such as tanning beds or tanning lamps. The sun's UV rays can be harmful and damage your skin leading to:

- Wrinkled skin
- Sagging skin
- Dry skin
- Color changes on the skin
- Skin cancer

The main risk for developing skin cancer is too much sun exposure on unprotected skin. UV rays that damage skin the most are UVA and UVB rays, which cause tanning and burning of the skin.

Things to Remember about Sun Exposure

- The sunlight coming through your car window can damage your skin.
- You can sunburn on a cloudy day. The sun's rays can pass through clouds on an overcast day.
- Snow, ice, sand, water and concrete around pools can reflect the sun's rays and increase your chance of sunburn.
- Everyone is at risk for skin damage and should protect their skin. People of all skin colors can get skin cancer.

How do I protect myself from skin damage?

- Apply a sunscreen before going outdoors.
 - ▶ Use caution with spray sunscreens. Avoid getting it into the eyes, nose or mouth. Do not breathe in the spray. Spray the sunscreen into your hands and then apply it to your face, ears, and neck.
- Try to stay out of the sun between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM when the sun's rays are the strongest.

- Wear protective, tightly woven clothing such as a long-sleeved shirt and pants. If you are sensitive to the sun, consider buying sun-protective lightweight clothing. Use an umbrella for shade.
- Wear a tightly woven hat with a round brim. The brim of the hat should be at least 4 inches wide.
- Protect your eyes from sunlight with sunglasses, even when walking short distances.
- Do not use tanning beds and tanning salons. Their UV light causes early aging and increases your risk of skin cancer.

How do I choose a sunscreen?

- Choose a product that says “broad spectrum” coverage with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or higher. SPF ratings tell you how well the sunscreen blocks the sun’s harmful UV rays.
- Products that are not broad spectrum or that are broad spectrum but have SPF values less than 15 will have a "Skin Cancer/Skin Aging Alert" on the label. These products will prevent sunburn but not skin cancer or early aging of skin. They are not recommended to protect your skin.
- If you are at risk for acne, use oil-free products. If a sunscreen causes stinging, itching or a rash, try a fragrance-free product that lists titanium dioxide or zinc oxide as an active ingredient.
- Avoid products that combine UV and insect protection in one bottle. The sunscreen effect may be reduced.
- Use make-up with UV protection plus moisturizer on your face. You should apply a full teaspoon on your face to provide enough protection from the sun.
- Keep babies younger than 6 months out of the sun. At 6 months, use a product made for babies. Limit sun exposure for babies.
- Certain medicines or types of make-up may increase your sensitivity to sun.

How do I use sunscreen?

- Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going outdoors. It may be helpful to apply sunscreen in front of a mirror to make sure your skin is fully covered.

- It takes at least an ounce of sunscreen, or enough to fill the palm of your hand, to cover all exposed parts of your body. Adjust the amount of sunscreen you use based on your body size.
- Remember to put sunscreen on your nose, entire neck, top of your feet, top of your ears, and your lips. Wax-based sunscreen sticks are less messy and last longer on these areas.
- Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours when outdoors, even on cloudy days. No matter what the label says, you need to put on more sunscreen when it is windy, after being in the water, or after working up a sweat.
- Keep sunscreen nearby, in places such as:
 - ▶ Purse
 - ▶ Backpack
 - ▶ Car glove compartment
 - ▶ Boat
 - ▶ Golf bag
 - ▶ Patio / deck
- Check the expiration date on sunscreen. Throw away expired sunscreen.

Check Your Skin

- Look at your skin every month. Ask for the handout “Melanoma and Skin Exam”. Tell your doctor about any new or unusual bumps, spots or changes in a mole.
- Have your skin checked by your doctor each year at your regular health visit. People at high risk for skin cancer may need to have their skin checked more often.

Use a sunscreen regularly to help prevent skin cancer.

Remember to use SPF 30 or greater.

Burn patients should use SPF 40 or greater.