

ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



JUNE 2017

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: IT'S TIME FOR SUNSCREEN



Now that it is getting warmer outside, you may start thinking about wearing sunscreen. Did you know that you should wear sunscreen every day you are outside? That includes even in the middle of the winter.

Sunscreen is important for protection from sunburn, early aging and skin cancer. It works by protecting you from the ultraviolet rays that come from the sun. Specifically it protects the skin from two different types of radiation: UVA and UVB. UVA or Ultraviolet A is the type of ray that causes the skin to age and creates lasting skin damage. UVB or Ultraviolet B rays cause sunburns.

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Cover up your skin as much as possible. This includes wearing a brimmed hat and sunglasses.

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They both can cause skin cancer. When you see a sunscreen that is labeled “Broad Spectrum,” it means that the sunscreen protects from both UVA and UVB rays.

When selecting a sunscreen, the Skin Cancer Foundation and the American Cancer Society recommend an SPF of 30 or higher. The SPF, or Sun Protection Factor, is a measure of how long the skin can be in the sun before it starts to burn. The higher the number, the greater the protection. For example, an SPF of 45 means that you would be able to stay outside in the sun 45 times longer without getting burned. However, sunscreens lose their effectiveness so you need to reapply every 2 hours.

The recommendation is for the application of about 1 ounce of sunscreen for the average person. This is about 2 tablespoons. You should apply sunscreen about 30 minutes before you go outside. If you are active, whether in the water or out, you should also reapply sunscreen often. There are sunscreens designed to be “water-resistant” or “sweat-resistant.” These usually specify the length of time they are effective.

In addition to putting on sunscreen, here are a few other ways to protect yourself from the sun’s rays:

- Try to stay out of the sun during the hottest parts of the day. Typically, this is between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Cover up your skin as much as possible. This includes wearing a brimmed hat and sunglasses.

Sunscreen is important for skin cancer prevention. The use of sunscreen every day can help prevent skin cancer and signs of early aging caused by the sun.



- Talk to your healthcare provider about getting a skin exam by a professional every year.

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SOURCES:

- <https://www.cancer.org/research/infographics-gallery/skin-cancer-prevention.html>
- <http://www.skincancer.org/publications/sun-and-skin-news/summer-2015-32-3/sunscreen>

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