

Children and Sun Safety

A Brief Summary

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Excessive and unprotected exposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation (UV light) is the primary risk factor for skin cancer. However, skin cancer is one of the most preventable types of cancer!

The damaging and cumulative effects of UV light begin when an infant's or toddler's unprotected

skin is exposed to sunlight. Protecting the skin from ultraviolet radiation can prevent approximately 80% of skin cancers.

You, as a parent, are important to helping prevent skin cancer! Teach your children early about sun protection to decrease their potential for future skin cancers.



UVA and UVB Are Two Types of Radiation that Damage Skin



It's important to shield your children's skin from the damaging effects of the sun. No matter what they're doing or what time of year it is, if they're outside, your children need to be protected.

The sun's rays can penetrate deeply into skin and damage the skin's lower layers. It can cause sunburn, wrinkles, freckles, sun-tans, precancerous skin conditions, and skin cancer.

One severe sunburn early in life **doubles** the chances of future skin cancer!

Build Safe Sun Habits

Build safe sun habits into your family's daily routine. Lead by example—children will respond better when they see you protecting your skin. Begin by teaching them to:

- Use sunscreen.
- Wear protective clothing.
- Wear sunglasses.
- Wear a hat that shades the face, neck, and ears.
- Reduce time outdoors between 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Did You Know?

Children receive about 80% of their lifetime exposure to ultraviolet radiation during the first 18 years of life.

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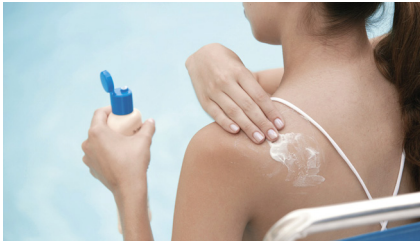


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Sun Screen

Children and adults should use sunscreen every day—even on cloudy days. Seventy to 80% of the sun's damaging rays can penetrate through clouds and water.



Sunscreens work in two ways. The chemicals in most sunscreens absorb ultraviolet radiation before it can damage the skin. Some sunscreens block ultraviolet rays by scattering or reflecting them away from the skin.

Apply a sunscreen and lip balm with an SPF of 15 or greater every day!

Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going out in the sun to allow time for it to work. Use broad-spectrum sunscreen products that block out both ultraviolet-A and ultraviolet-B rays.

Use waterproof sunscreens that will not be washed off through perspiration, and to be sure you're protected, **reapply sunscreen every two hours if swimming or sweating.**

Sunglasses

Overexposure to the sun can cause short- and long-term damage to the eyes. Protection of the eyes is especially important for young children since the lens of the eye is not able to completely protect the retina from the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation.

Buy sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB radiation.

Darker sunglasses are not necessarily better because UV protection comes from an invisible chemical applied to the lenses—not from the color or darkness of the lenses.

Buy large-framed wraparound sunglasses with velcro adjustable headbands to protect your child's eyes from all angles.



Did You Know?

Swimwear and outerwear are now being made with UV protection!

Clothing and Hats

Clothing can block out the sun's harmful rays and should be one of the first lines of defense against sun exposure.

Fabric is full of tiny holes that can allow ultraviolet light through. The fewer the number and the smaller the size of the holes in the fabric, the more it blocks ultraviolet radiation.

Lighter colors may feel cooler, but darker colors actually absorb ultraviolet light and promote more protection for the skin.

■ *Hats offer the best method of minimizing ultraviolet radiation to the face, head, ears, and neck.*

A hat with a wide brim that goes all the way around offers the best protection. The hat's brim should be at least 3 to 4 inches wide.

A wide-brimmed hat provides approximately 50 percent protection from direct exposure.

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