

DERMATOLOGY — & Skin Health —

Sun Protection Guidelines

Minimize sun exposure, especially during the middle of the day when the UVB (sunburn rays) intensity is greatest (10 a.m. to 2 p.m., or 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. daylight savings time.) Seek the shade. Sun bathing, even when wearing sunscreen, is still harmful!

Wear sun-protective clothing when outside: this means a hat with at least a 4 inch circumferential brim, long sleeved shirt, and long pants or skirt. The fabric must also be sun-protective; a light cotton material does not protect well from the sun. Some lines of clothing are marketed today with an SPF rating, and some of these are designed for comfort in hot weather. (URLs listed below.)

Use SPF 15 or higher sunscreen on all areas of skin not covered by clothing.

Apply sunscreen to the face every morning if you want thorough protection against sun-related aging and discoloration of the skin. Remember that such changes are not only induced by intense sun exposure, but also by cumulative, mild, brief exposures to the sun.

Broad-spectrum sunscreen (UVA and UVB) is more effective in protecting against sun-related aging than is sunscreen that only filters UVB. "Broad-spectrum" means that the sunscreen has components that absorb or reflect UVA as well as UVB. The SPF refers only to the capacity to screen UVB; **regulations or labelling guidelines on UVA blocking are still pending**. The most effective sunscreens in the U.S. contain **micronized zinc oxide**

Reapply sunscreen every two hours if you are out in the sun, and reapply after swimming or excessive perspiration.

Reflective surfaces (snow, water, sand, concrete) increase exposure. Even shade is not complete protection when there is significant reflection from surroundings.

Sun tanning booths do cause sun damage, in spite of advertisements to the contrary. They cause premature aging of the skin and skin cancers.

It is possible to become allergic to sunscreen products. If you think this might apply to you, you should discuss it with a dermatologist. Even if you have very sensitive skin, it is always possible to find a sun-protective regimen. One of the best sunscreens for sensitive skin is Neutrogena Sensitive Skin.

Infants under 6 months: generally should be kept out of the sun. If sun exposure is likely, use or zinc oxide-based sunscreen.

DERMATOLOGY

— *& Skin Health* —

Sun Protection Resources

- Skin Cancer Foundation: www.skincancer.org (800) 754-6490
A thorough site dedicated to skin cancer information and prevention.
- Sun Precautions: www.sunprecautions.com (800) 882-7860
- Coolibar: www.coolibar.com (800) 926-6509

The above two companies offer complete, but expensive, lines of exceptional sun-protective clothes. These two lines are very similar, and are the only ones I have found offering shirts that I can comfortably wear in the summer. Check their web sites or call them for catalogs.

Note: If you are truly cautious about sun protection, you also need to make sure you have sufficient Vitamin D in your diet! The easiest way to be sure is to take Vitamin D supplements.