

Sun Safety

Not all Sun Protection Products are Created Equal!

Fast Facts

- Most skin cancers are influenced by excessive skin exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays.
- UV rays – such as those emitted by the sun – can actually affect skin cells' DNA.
 - Damage is cumulative – exposure to high intensity rays for long periods of time can overcome the body's ability to repair the skin damage.
 - Sun's UV rays cause skin cells to mutate → malignant tumors form → skin cancer.
- Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer, with 5.4 million new diagnoses in the US annually.
- This single disease contributes almost \$5 billion to American healthcare expenses each year.
- Most cases of skin cancer occur in older adults ≥ 65 years, however...

The right practices early on can help lower your risk of developing skin cancer later in life!

Knowledge Check!

Q: TRUE OR FALSE: sun protection is important only in the summer.

A: FALSE! Protection from UV rays is important all year. UV rays can reach you on cloudy and cool days, and they reflect off of surfaces like water, cement, sand, and snow.

Q: TRUE OR FALSE: What time are UV rays strongest?

A: FALSE! In the US, UV rays tend to be strongest from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daylight saving time. Limit time in the sun in this timeframe!

Protect yourself with...

- **Shade:** Avoid direct sun contact by seeking shade from umbrellas, trees, or shelters.
- **Clothing:** Aim for long garments, tightly woven fabrics, darker colors, and dry materials.
- **Hats & Headwear:** Brimmed hats can prevent the face's sensitive skin.
- **Sunglasses:** Protective eyewear will not only protect the sensitive skin around the eyes, but can also reduce the risk of cataracts.
- **Sunscreen / Sunblock:** The absolute best form of sun protection in addition to these other measures is a broad-spectrum high-SPF Sunscreen!

| Sunscreen | Sunblock |
|--|---|
| Chemical defense – absorbs UV light | physical defense – reflects UV light |
| Application requires rubbing in to penetrate skin | Simple application to skin's exterior as physical barrier |
| Ingredients include organic chemical compounds | Ingredients include minerals |
| Depending on formulation, may be designed to prevent UVA rays (that promote skin damage, wrinkles and cancer) and/or UVB rays (that cause sunburn) | |

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Choosing & Using the Right Sun Protection Product

- Choose the one you'll wear! Personal skin conditions may make one product more appealing than others. For example, individuals with sensitive skin may prefer a sensitive sunblock because sunscreen's chemical ingredients may cause a reaction.
- **SPF:** Sun Protection Factor assigns a number for how well the sunscreen/block prevents UV rays. Higher numbers indicate more protection. Aim for a product with SPF ≥ 15 . Fair individuals may even seek SPF ≥ 30 .
 - DID YOU KNOW sun protectants < SPF-15 are required to have a warning stating that the product has only been shown to prevent sunburn, and not reduce the risk of skin cancer or skin aging?
- **Broad Spectrum:** indicates the sun protectant prevents both UVA and UVB rays. Recommended!
- **Water Resistant:** indicates the sun protectant are resistant for 40 or 80 minutes. Recommended! Note, no sun protectants are waterproof and reapplication is needed!
- **Application:** Apply an even coat to all exposed skin 15 minutes before going outside and per product directions.
- **Reapplication:** Reapply as directed by product instructions. Generally, no later than 2 hours after first application, and after swimming, sweating, or toweling off.