



WELLBEING

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Summer Report: Safer in the Sun



It's that time of year again. Longer days, warm temperatures and bright sunshine lure us out into the open where we bare our skin to the elements.

The sun feels good...and, in small doses it *can* be good. A number of medical practitioners recommend exposing face and arms to sunshine a few minutes every day to take in healthy Vitamin D.

But, the fact is that most of us will spend a lot more than 10 minutes a day outside this summer. And over time, we will the pay with price. Luckily, this is

a problem that is very preventable.

The ABCs of UV Rays

It's the invisible Ultra Violet rays from the sun that damage your skin and can lead to skin cancer over time. UVA rays literally get under your skin, causing deep damage and wrinkles. UVB rays that don't go as deep can cause sunburn.

About Your Sunscreen

Take a tip from lifeguards: apply zinc oxide to provide extra protection for the nose, cheeks and tops of your ears.

Select "broad spectrum" products that block both UVA and UVB rays.

Look for water-resistant or waterproof sunscreens; remember to choose a clear gel type that won't sweat off easily if you are going to be active.

A 15 SPF provides about 93% protection; a 30 SPF provides 97% protection.

Apply sunscreen about ½ hour before going out and reapply it every two hours.

Shades of Choice

Select sunglasses for substance as well as style. Look for labels that say: 100% UV protection.

The lenses can be any color or tint, and the glasses don't have to be expensive.

Dress for Success

Wear loose clothing. Select tightly woven fabrics; cotton is a good choice because it's cool and protective.

Consider sun-protective or UV-protective clothing that has a UPF (Ultraviolet Protection Factor) rating. A UPF of 50 means that piece of clothing lets only 1/50th of the sun's UV radiation through.

Wear a densely woven, wide-brimmed hat (not straw). If you are bald or balding, apply water-resistant sunscreen on your head, ears and neck first.

If you are going to be sitting outside, bring an umbrella (parasol).

Let the Index Be Your Guide

The UV Index was developed by the National Weather Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to help the public assess the danger of UV exposure. Check the Index each day before heading outside.

UV Rating	Risk Level	Action
2 or less	Low danger for most people	Wear sunglasses; if you burn easily, use sunscreen and cover up.
3 to 5	Moderate	Cover up; seek shade during midday when sun is strongest.
6 to 7	High	Use sunscreen with SPF of 15 or higher; wear hat with wide brim and sunglasses; reduce time spent in sun between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.
8 to 10	Very High	Follow precautions for High risk. Minimize / avoid sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
11+	Extreme	Take all precautions and stay out of the sun during peak hours.

Save the Skin You're In - At Any Age

Babies and Toddlers

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) says babies under 6 months should **not** be exposed to direct sunlight. They are too young to use sunblock and their developing eyes are vulnerable so “move your baby to the shade under a tree, umbrella or stroller canopy.”



When infants are old enough for sunblock, choose Zinc Oxide or Titanium Dioxide which won't react with their sensitive skin. Test out any sunblock you plan to use on

young children; apply a small amount to the child's back and check for a reaction.

Dress infants in lightweight clothing that covers their arms and legs; protect their heads with brimmed hats.

Sunglasses with UV protection are an important summer accessory for children. You don't have to buy expensive glasses to get adequate protection, but it is a good idea to have them tested by an optometrist to make sure they are delivering the promised protection.

What Kids Should Know

If you can see your shadow, and it's taller than you are (early morning or late afternoon), UV ray exposure is low. If your shadow is shorter than you are, or you can't see a shadow (late morning into early afternoon), you're being exposed to high levels of UV rays. It's time to head for the shade!



Wear sunglasses or goggles when you are swimming or skiing, and make sure you apply sunscreen on your

nose and under your chin.

Drink water or *non-carbonated* beverages often. And, don't wait until you are very thirsty.

Reminders for Adults and Parents

Many people think a tan looks healthy. But dermatologists will tell you a tan is a sign of damage. The skin may not burn, but it has been damaged and that damage will be cumulative.

Medications can make you more sun-sensitive. If you or any family members are taking antibiotics (tetracycline, sulfa drugs), diuretics (Lasix[®]), anti-inflammatory medicines (Motrin[®] or Aleve[®]), or estrogen supplements, make sure you/they take extra precautions and avoid prolonged sun exposure during peak hours. If you are not sure how a particular medication interacts with sun, call your doctor or pharmacist.

Are your kids in summer camp or day camp where they will be outside? Check with teachers and counselors to make sure they don't schedule outdoor activities during midday, and that they do encourage children to cover up, drink water and wear hats and sunglasses.

Surf First

Before you hit the beach, take the kids online to learn more about sun safety.

- 1) Try the American Academy of Dermatology's "RAYS: Your Grade" sun-smart survey. <http://staff.aad.org/raysyourgrade/>
- 2) Check out EPA's SunWise Program with interactive activities and tips for kids. www.epa.gov/sunwise/kids.html

