SKIN CANCER FOUNDATION



Your Daily *Sun* Protection Guide







The sun sustains life and feels good, but it can be your skin's worst enemy. While every sunburn can increase your risk of skin cancer, it's not just those big days at the beach or ballgame that cause trouble. Each time you run out to get the mail, walk the dog or commute to work without sun protection also adds to the damage that can lead to skin cancer (as well as leathery skin, dark spots and wrinkles).

No single method of **SUN DEFENSE** can protect you perfectly, though. That's why we created this roundup of advice for you. The best path to **BEAUTIFUL, HEALTHY SKIN** is to adopt as many of these steps as possible into your lifestyle, and make them daily habits everywhere you go, all year long.

HOW THE SUN'S RAYS HARM YOU



- The sun produces two types of ultraviolet (UV) rays that can hurt your skin. The ones called **UVB** cause sunburn, while those known as **UVA** also lead to sunburn, as well as tanning, wrinkles and skin aging.
- When either type of UV light reaches your unprotected skin, **damage to the DNA** in your skin cells starts within minutes. Your immune system will repair some of this damage, but not all of it.
- Over time, the remaining DNA damage can cause **mutations that lead to skin cancer**.

The Skin Cancer Foundation advises everyone to use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher every day. For extended outdoor activity, use a water-resistant, broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 50 or higher. Reapply every two hours or after swimming or sweating.

1 *Cover It Up*



Clothing can provide a great barrier against the sun's UV rays. Its protection is consistent over time and doesn't wear off like sunscreen does. Many new fabrics offer high-tech protection and breathability, too. The more skin you cover (high neck, long sleeves, pants), the better, and a hat with a wide brim all the way around (three inches or more) is best because it helps shade your eyes, face and neck. Also wear UV-blocking sunglasses to protect your eyes and the skin around them.

What Does UPF Mean?
Look for UPF, which stands for ultraviolet protection factor, on labels for clothing, hats and fabrics. The number indicates what fraction of the sun's UV rays can penetrate the fabric. A shirt labeled UPF 50, for example, allows just 1/50th of the UV radiation to reach your skin.

The pitfall: Any clothing leaves some skin exposed, so you need sunscreen, too. Don't forget to apply it to the back of your hands, especially after washing them.

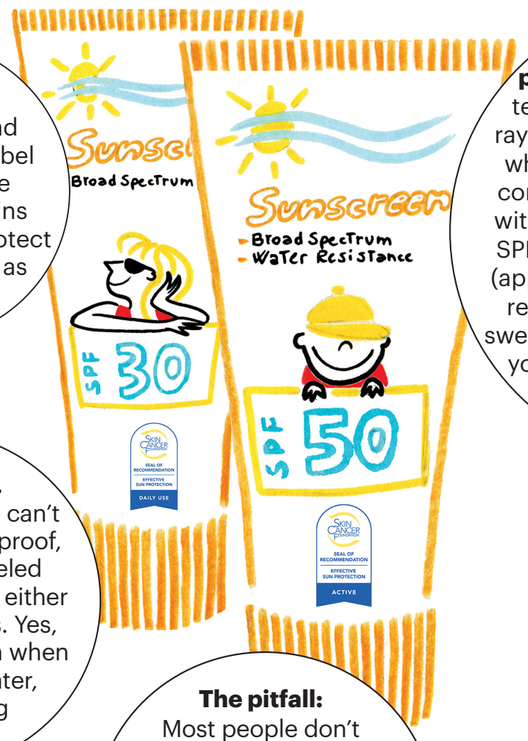
2 Play in the Shade

When you are outside, think of shade as your refuge, especially between 10 AM and 4 PM, the peak hours of sun intensity. Walk on the shady side of the street, sit under an awning or sun-protective umbrella, duck onto the covered porch at a pool party or even under a tree.

The pitfall: Shade isn't a perfect shield. Some UV rays can still reach your skin. They can pass through leaves and branches, hit your skin from the side and reflect off water, sand, glass and concrete.

3 *Know Your Sunscreen*

Sunscreens come in many formulations and delivery methods, and it can take trial and error to find the one you like best. Whether it's a sport spray, an easy-to-use stick or a rich moisturizer with antiaging ingredients, the best sunscreen is the one you will use every day.



Broad Spectrum. The words "broad spectrum" on a label indicate that the sunscreen contains ingredients that protect against UVA rays as well as UVB.

SPF stands for sun protection factor. The number tells you how long the sun's UVB rays would take to redden your skin when using a particular sunscreen compared with the amount of time without sunscreen. So if you use an SPF 30 product exactly as directed (applied generously and evenly, and reapplied after two hours or after sweating or swimming), it would take you 30 times longer to burn than if you weren't wearing sunscreen.

Water Resistance. While sunscreens can't claim to be waterproof, they can be labeled water resistant for either 40 or 80 minutes. Yes, you can burn even when you're in the water, so reapplying is key!

Sensitive Skin. Products containing zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, sometimes referred to as mineral or physical formulas, may be less likely to cause skin irritation in people who have sensitive skin.

The pitfall: Most people don't apply sunscreen exactly as directed. They may not apply it liberally enough, might miss spots and may forget to reapply regularly. Slather it on!



4 Shield the Wee Ones

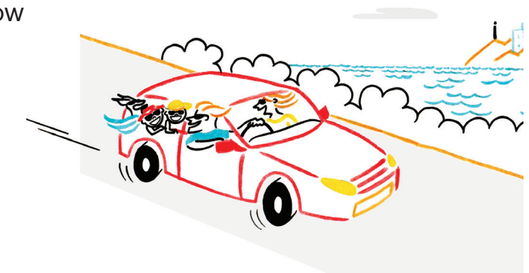
Infants: It's best in the first six months to keep infants out of the sun rather than use sunscreen on their sensitive skin. Clothing should cover a baby's vulnerable arms and legs, and don't forget to use hats, sunglasses and stroller sunshades.
Toddlers: In addition to providing a protective hat and clothing, you can apply sunscreen to children starting at six months.

The pitfall: Unexpected exposure can happen, for example, with a babysitter. Be prepared; talk to caregivers in advance about sun protection.

5 LOOK OUT FOR WINDOWS

- While glass blocks UVB rays pretty well, it **allows UVA rays to pass through.** This is true of your windows at home as well as on the road.
- Car windshields are treated to shield drivers from most UVA, **but side, back and sunroof windows** usually aren't. When you're in your car, protect yourself and your family with hats, clothing, sunglasses, sunscreen, whatever it takes. Another option is to have UV-protective window film applied to windows, in your home or car. Local laws may apply.
- The windows on **airplanes, trains and buses** also allow UVA rays to pass through. That's why airline pilots, crew members and even frequent travelers may get more skin cancers than other people.

The pitfall: You need to plan ahead before traveling and make sure you have sunscreen on and protective clothing with you.



6 Say No to Tanning Beds

It's simple: Don't use a tanning bed — *ever*. Indoor tanning (even one time) raises the risk of all kinds of skin cancer, including melanoma. In fact, using a tanning bed before age 35 increases your risk of melanoma by 75 percent.

The pitfall: While a number of states have implemented laws prohibiting minors under a certain age (varying from 18 to 14) from using tanning beds, or requiring parental consent, other states have not restricted access. Peer pressure to be tan can affect your better judgment at any age. Say no!

7 *Seek the Seal*

SEAL OF RECOMMENDATION
EFFECTIVE SUN PROTECTION

You can find our Seal of Recommendation on the types of sun protection in this guide. Our volunteer Photobiology Committee ensures that every product that earns the Seal of Recommendation meets or exceeds our scientific criteria.

When you see it on clothing, hats, eyewear, awnings, umbrellas, window film, glass and sunscreen, you can trust these will protect against harmful UV rays and damage that will lead to skin cancer.

The Big See for Early Detection

Cancer is called "the Big C," but skin cancer is the cancer you can *see*. Your eyes are a powerful tool to detect skin cancer early, when it's most curable. If you see anything **new, changing or unusual** on your skin, see a dermatologist. It could save your life! For more information, visit **TheBigSee.org**

More Resources for You

Visit **SkinCancer.org** for comprehensive information on skin cancer prevention, detection and treatment.

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