

Sun Safety

We all know it's good for children (and adults) to spend time playing and exercising outdoors. It's important to do so safely. Here are some simple rules to protect your family from sunburns. Make sure everyone in the family knows the importance of protecting their skin and eyes.

- Keep babies younger than six months out of direct sunlight. Find shade under a tree, umbrella, or stroller canopy.
- Use sunscreen (see below for tips on proper sunscreen usage). It should be used by everyone greater than six months of age.
- When possible, dress yourself and your children in cool, comfortable clothing that covers the body, such as lightweight pants, long-sleeved shirts, and hats. Select clothes with a tight weave that allows less light through the fabric. Or you can look for protective clothing labeled with an Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) listed on the tag.
- Wear a hat with an all-around 3-inch brim to shield face, ears and back of the neck.
- Limit your sun exposure between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM when UV rays are strongest.
- Wear sunglasses with at least 99% UV protection. Look for fun child-sized glasses too.

How to Pick Sunscreen

Sunscreen can help protect your skin from sunburn and some skin cancers, but only if used correctly. *Keep in mind that sunscreen should be used for sun protection, not a reason to stay in the sun longer.*

- Use a sunscreen that says "broad-spectrum" on the labels; that means it will screen out both UVB and UVA rays.
- Use a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 and up to 50 SPF. Studies show a sunscreen with greater than 50 SPF may not offer extra protection.
- *If possible* avoid the sunscreen ingredient oxybenzone because of concerns about mild hormonal properties (using these sunscreens are better than none at all, however).
- For sensitive areas of the body, such as the nose, cheeks, tops of ears, and shoulders choose a sunscreen with zinc oxide or titanium oxide. Some come in fun colors that kids enjoy wearing.

How to Apply Sunscreen Properly

- Use enough sunscreen to cover all exposed areas, especially the face, nose, ears, feet, hands and even backs of the knees. Rub it in well.
- Put sunscreen on 15 to 30 minutes before going outdoors. It needs time to absorb into the skin.
- Use sunscreen any time you or your child spend time outdoors. Remember that you can get sunburn even on cloudy days because up to 80% of the sun's rays can get through the clouds. Also, UV rays can bounce back from water, sand, snow, and concrete so make sure you're protected.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours and after swimming, sweating, or drying off with a towel. Because most people use too little sunscreen, make sure to apply a generous amount.