

## Summer's Here - Sun Protection Tips

As the summer holiday season approaches, we often need reminders or new ideas to help protect our skin from harmful UV rays.

### Choosing the Best UV Protection

While planning a beach vacation, we tend to have more important things on our minds than sun protection.

Whether people want to admit it or not, looking great at the beach takes some special planning. Not getting sunburned also takes some special planning. A lot of people tend to shy away from sunscreens because several of them are coloured. No one wants to go to the beach looking like a cartoon character! No worries, beach bums - there are plenty of sunscreens that rub in clear.

All sunscreens have a sun protection factor, or SPF, printed on the bottle or label. A minimum SPF of 15 blocks most of the sun's harmful rays and helps prevent sunburn.

The minimum SPF does not offer maximum protection; some rays will still penetrate and may burn you. It is highly recommended that you use a sunscreen with an SPF of more than 15. Broad-spectrum sunscreens with SPF of higher than 15 that also contain avobenzone, ecamsule, zinc oxide or titanium dioxide are proven to be more effective against all of the sun's UVA and UVB rays.

### Applying Sunscreen

If you read the label, you will likely see 'generously apply' -but what does that really mean?

Apply sunscreen in a similar fashion that you would apply lotion to very dry skin. Apply about one ounce of sunscreen to the legs. Follow up with about one ounce to the face, neck shoulders and arms. In all, an adult should probably use 2-3 ounces of sunscreen per application.

The initial application should take place about 30 minutes before entering the sun. This short wait allows your skin to absorb some of the protective chemicals. Reapply sunscreen about every 1.5-2 hours.

Even "water resistant" sunscreens often get washed away within an hour. Any time you dry your skin with a towel, reapply your sunscreen.

### Other Sunscreen Options

Female beach-goers tend to feel their best when they can wear makeup. Even a hint of colour can help a woman feel her best.

Avoid lip glosses that do not offer SPF! Lip cancer is one of the most common forms of skin cancer. Using lip gloss without SPF helps pull more of the sun's power to your lips. Many cosmetic companies now advertise SPF in not only lip glosses and lipsticks, but in other products as well. Facial creams can be a great way to ensure you have enough SPF to protect delicate facial skin as well as ears, neck and chest.

### Clothing, Sunglasses and Hats

While you're just relaxing in the sun, save the sunscreen and wear a light layer of clothing. Clothing will help protect your skin, but not as well as sunscreen.

A typical cotton t-shirt provides about the same protection as most SPF 15 sunscreens. Proper summertime clothing can also help keep you cooler. Darker colored clothing can provide more protection from the sun than light colors.

Many companies are creating sun-protective garments that help protect against the sun's rays. Detergent companies are joining the battle and creating laundry detergents that add polymers to clothing that will help block UV rays.

Wide brimmed hats are an excellent addition to the summer holidays wardrobe. Hats help protect the forehead, nose and ears from sunburn. The hat doesn't have to be huge. Just 2-3 inches will help protect delicate skin from a painful burn. Baseball caps can help protect the face, but not the neck or ears. Tightly woven straw hats can help protect and shade you from the sun's glare.

Sunglasses are a very important factor to any summertime wardrobe. Dark sunglasses aren't enough. To effectively deter UV rays, glasses must have a special chemical coating. Look for sunglasses with an ANSI label. The sun's rays can still penetrate darker plastics. Don't forget children's sensitive eyes as well. Children need the same eye protection as adults.

#### Avoid Alcohol

Drinking alcohol can lead to more severe sunburn.

Alcoholic beverages tend to dehydrate the skin, making it more susceptible to sunburn. Excessive alcohol consumption tends to make sun-lovers less aware of the amount of time they have spent in the sun and increases the chance of sunburn.

#### About the Author

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