

What is Sunscreen?

Sunscreen is a lotion that protects you from the dangerous UV rays of the sun. UV rays damage the skin and can cause skin cancer or wrinkles.



Which Sunscreen is Right for Me?

More expensive products are not necessarily better. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about specific brands.

1. Always buy a product that has **SPF 15 or higher** and protects against both **UVA** and **UVB** rays.
2. **Waterproof** sunscreen protects you from the sun for up to 80 minutes in water. **Water-resistant** means you will only get 40 minutes of protection.
3. If you have sensitive skin, use a product that says **hypoallergenic** on the label.
4. If you are acne prone, look for a product that is **non-comedogenic**.
5. Sunscreens should never be used past their **expiration date**. They might become less effective. Discard any unused sunscreen at the end of the year and buy a new product.



Tips for Applying Sunscreen

In order to get maximum benefit from a sunscreen, make sure you apply it correctly. Follow these simple tips:

1. Apply 30 minutes before going outside.
2. Re-apply every 2 hours or right after swimming, toweling off, sweating or strenuous exercise.
3. ‘Test’ a small dab first on the back of your hand to see if you are allergic to the product. If you develop a rash or itching, stop using it! Call your doctor or pharmacist about using a different product.
4. Apply a thick, even layer over all exposed skin. Do not rub into skin. Use at least one ounce to cover your entire body. Apply a quarter-sized amount to each body area. Don’t forget the neck, ears, scalp, face, and lips. Avoid eyes and eyelids.



Sun Safety

Apply sunscreen year round. The sun’s rays can be dangerous even in the winter, especially when reflecting off ice and snow.



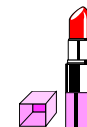
Stay in the shade whenever possible but wear sunscreen then, too. The sun’s rays can bounce off of sand, water, and concrete right onto you.



Wear protective clothing in addition to sunscreen. Make sure you wear sunglasses and a wide-brim hat. A baseball cap does not offer enough protection! Choose clothing that is a tight weave, dark color, and made of unbleached cotton or thin silk. Special SPF clothing is also available.



Avoid being in the sun during its peak times, usually 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Sunscreen can be worn underneath make-up.



Certain medications can make you burn easier than you normally would. Check with your pharmacist to determine if the sun and your medicine is an unsafe combination.

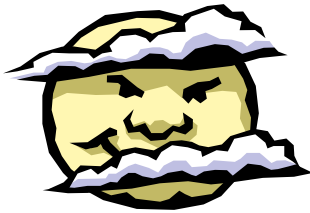
Sunscreen Myths

Myth #1: Sunscreen in the eyes causes blindness.

Fact: Not true! Sunscreen can be irritating in your eyes but never causes blindness. If sunscreen gets in the eyes, call the Connecticut Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 immediately for first aid advice.

Myth #2: Sunscreen is not necessary when swimming or while outside on cloudy days.

Fact: Wear sunscreen even on cloudy days. Dangerous rays can reach you even through clouds and water.



Myth #3: Babies under 6 months old should not wear sunscreen.

Fact: According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, sunscreen is safe for use on children under 6 months old. Keeping babies out of the sun is the best method of protection.

Myth #4: SPF 20 sunscreen allows you to stay in the sun all day.

Fact: The SPF (Sun Protection Factor) helps determine what product is best for your skin type. If it takes you 20 minutes to burn without sunscreen, SPF 20 will allow you about 400 minutes in the sun (20 minutes x 20 SPF = 400 minutes) without burning. SPFs over 45 are not more effective.

Resources

Skin Cancer Foundation
www.skincancer.org
1-800-SKIN-490

American Cancer Society
www.cancer.org
1-800-ACS-2345

Centers for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov
1-800-311-3435

Contact Us

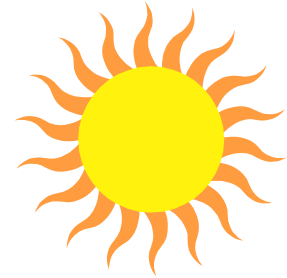
The Connecticut Poison Control Center is a free and confidential service of the University of Connecticut Health Center. Poison information specialists are available 24-hours-a-day, 7 days a week. Call 1-800-222-1222 if you have a poisoning exposure. For TDD call 1-866-218-5372. Call 860-679-3531 to order educational materials and ask poison prevention questions.

Check out our website for more information about poisons, <http://poisoncontrol.uhc.edu>.



University of Connecticut
Health Center

This project was supported by a grant from the Health Resources and Human Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



Sunscreen Safety Tips



Connecticut Poison
Control Center