

Sunscreen

Babies under 6 months:

- The two main recommendations from the AAP to prevent sunburn are to avoid sun exposure, and dress infants in lightweight long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and brimmed hats that shade the neck to prevent sunburn. However when adequate clothing and shade are not available, parents can apply a minimal amount of sunscreen with at least 15 SPF (sun protection factor) to small areas, such as the infant's face and the back of the hands. The best sunscreens for young infants are those whose only active ingredients are ZINC OXIDE or TITANIUM DIOXIDE. These are physical rather than chemical blocks, which will not harm the infant if licked or ingested in tiny amounts.

For Young Children:

- Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going outside, and use sunscreen even on cloudy days. The SPF should be at least 15 and protect against UVA and UVB rays.

For Older Children:

- The first, and best, line of defense against the sun is covering up. Wear a hat with a three-inch brim or a bill facing forward, sunglasses (look for sunglasses that block 99-100% of ultraviolet rays), and cotton clothing with a tight weave.
- Stay in the shade whenever possible, and limit sun exposure during the peak intensity hours - between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or greater. Be sure to apply enough sunscreen - about one ounce per sitting for a young adult.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or after swimming or sweating.
- Use extra caution near water, snow, and sand as they reflect UV rays and may result in sunburn more quickly.
- Sunscreens used to be classified according to their sun protection strength, which was expressed as a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) ranging from 2 to 50. The higher the number, the longer the user can stay in the sun without burning. So let's say that your youngster typically burns in about fifteen minutes. A sunblock with an SPF of 15 would afford him 225 minutes (just under four hours) of safe exposure. If he is dark-complexioned and generally doesn't burn for, say, forty minutes, the same product would enable him to spend six hundred worry-free minutes outdoors.
- Having said that, *no one* should bake in the sun for that long, regardless of how much sunscreen he slathers on his skin. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has since pared down the categories to just three strengths: minimum (which corresponds to 2 SPF to 12 SPF), moderate (12 SPF to 30 SPF) and high (30 SPF or greater). Moderate strength is the sensible choice for most people.
- **How to select a sunscreen:** Sunscreens are available in many forms, including ointments, creams, gels, lotions, sprays, and wax sticks. The type of sunscreen you choose is a matter of personal choice. Creams are best for individuals with dry skin, but gels are preferable in hairy

areas, such as the scalp or male chest. Sticks are good around the eyes. Creams typically yield a thicker application than lotions and are best for the face. There also are sunscreens made for specific purposes, such as sensitive skin and for use on babies.

- Ideally, sunscreens should be water-resistant, so they cannot be easily removed by sweating or swimming, and should have an SPF of 30 or higher that provides broad-spectrum coverage against both UVA and UVB light. **FDA approved ingredients** to look for on the sunscreen label to ensure broad-spectrum UV coverage include:
 - Avobenzone
 - Cinoxate
 - Ecamsule
 - Menthyl anthranilate
 - Octyl methoxycinnamate
 - Octyl salicylate
 - Oxybenzone
 - Sulisobenzene
 - **Titanium dioxide or zinc oxide**- these two ingredients are PHYSICAL rather than chemical blocks, thus are safe to use on small babies and are a good choice if you are looking to avoid chemicals that might be absorbed by the skin. Look for Blue Lizard Baby brand, or Neutrogena Pure & Free Baby.

Sunburn

- The signs of sunburn usually appear six to twelve hours after exposure, with the greatest discomfort during the first twenty- four hours. If your child's burn is just red, warm, and painful, you can treat it yourself. Apply cool compresses to the burned areas or bathe the child in cool water. You also can give acetaminophen to help relieve the pain. (Check the package for appropriate dosage for her age and weight.)
- If the sunburn causes blisters, fever, chills, headache, or a general feeling of illness, call your pediatrician. Severe sunburn must be treated like any other serious burn, and if it's very extensive, hospitalization sometimes is required. In addition, the blisters can become infected, requiring treatment with antibiotics. Sometimes extensive or severe sunburn also can lead to dehydration and, in some cases, fainting (heatstroke). Such cases need to be examined by your pediatrician or the nearest emergency facility.