

Sun Well: Protecting Your Skin

Follow these simple tips for sun-safe skin:

- Always wear sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15. Broad spectrum sunscreens are best as they absorb a higher percentage of UVA and UVB sun rays.
- Apply sunscreen generously to all exposed areas at least 20-30 minutes before going outside. This allows the sunscreen to bind to your skin so it won't immediately "sweat" off.
- Make sure to apply sunscreen to the places you typically might not think of: your lips, ears, between your fingers and toes, back of your neck, even the bottoms of your feet if you will be barefoot and lying on your stomach. Reapply every few hours and especially after swimming.
- Avoid peak hours – usually between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. This is when the sun's rays are most intense.
- Wear a wide-brim hat, sunglasses, and other protective clothing. Hats are best with at least a three-inch brim; sunglasses should protect against UVB rays; clothing should be lightweight and tightly woven for best protection. A quick test to see if your clothing has an adequate weave is to place your hand inside the garment and hold it up to a light. If you can't see your hand through the fabric, it's probably a good choice for cover.
- Stay shaded under a canopy or umbrella when outdoors during peak hours.
- Don't deliberately sunbathe.
- Don't use artificial tanning devices such as tanning beds or lamps. Instead, try a safer self-tanning product. Smear it on with a pair of latex or plastic gloves to avoid bronzing your palms, let it dry a few minutes, and go. Remember to use a sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15 underneath self-tanning products since they typically don't contain any.
- Keep infants out of the sun. The melanin in their skin isn't fully developed and they can burn more easily than older children and adults. If an infant must be in the sun, make sure his/her clothing completely covers the body. Include a hat with a wide brim that shades the face and ears. Keep him/her shaded under an umbrella. Sunscreen on babies' skin isn't always recommended, especially for those younger than 6 months. It's best to talk to your baby's pediatrician first before applying sunscreen to his/her skin.

For more information on protecting your skin, visit anthem.com. Also visit the following sites:

National Cancer Institute - www.cancer.gov

American Cancer Society – www.cancer.org

American Academy of Dermatology – www.aad.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – www.cdc.gov

National Institutes of Health – www.nih.gov

Sources: National Cancer Institute, American Academy of Dermatology, American Cancer Society

This information is intended for educational purposes only, and should not be interpreted as medical advice. Please consult your physician for advice about changes that may affect your health.

