



Sunscreens and Protective Clothing

- 1. Sun exposure is proven to cause skin cancer and also causes precancers of the skin (actinic keratoses)**
- 2. Sun exposure causes wrinkles of the skin and makes people look older than they actually are**
- 3. Avoiding the sun during 10AM and 4PM is the best approach, wearing good protective clothing at all times is the second best, and use of sunscreen is a distant third.**
- 4. Apply sunscreen every day to exposed sites, get in the habit of doing this along with other personal care habits that you do everyday such as brushing your teeth.**

Where can I buy clothing to protect myself from the sun?

Not all materials block the sun very well. Specially manufactured UV-protective clothing provide greater protection than standard fabrics. These are tight-weave fabrics and often incorporate chemical UV absorbers. Clothes are rated with a UPF (Ultraviolet Protection Factor). A wet white t-shirt has a UPF of two! Baseball hats offer limited protection. The following websites have sun protective clothing: www.solumbra.com and www.coolibar.com. Both have infant and kids options. This is a great option for infants.

I have a newborn, when can I apply sunscreen?

It used to be advised that you should not use sunscreen on babies less than six months old, but the American Academy of Pediatrics now states that sunscreen is probably safe to use on younger children, especially if you just use it on small areas of your baby's skin that is exposed to the sun and not protected by clothing, such as the infant's hands and face. Other experts say: Although there is no evidence to suggest that sunscreens are harmful to infants, there is no compelling reason for infants less than 6 months to have sun exposure prolonged enough to require sunscreens. Babies younger than 6 months are not mobile and will not be exposed to the sun unless placed there. Better to keep your child out of direct sunlight as much as possible and get a UV-protective suit (see above) if you plan a trip to the beach. Blue Lizard Baby Sunscreen is free of chemicals, fragrances, and other potential irritants—specially formulated for the most sensitive skin. Other good choices include Aveeno Baby. Vanicream sunscreens are also non-irritating and have a minimum number of ingredients.

Do you know how much sunscreen you need for a 1 week family vacation?

More than you think – Most experts recommend using 1 oz of sunscreen (a shot glass) per application to cover an adult and reapplying it every 2 hours. A family with 2 adults and 2 children, in the sun 6 hours per day (needing 3 applications of sunscreen), spending most of their time swimming (needing the sunscreen to protect most of their body), would need at least 2 bottles of sunscreen each day (assuming a standard 4 oz bottle or tube). So for a 6 day vacation that same family would need at least 12 bottles or tubes. If the family is sightseeing, biking, hiking or golfing, and wearing short-sleeve shirts and shorts, then they need less sunscreen - only 1 bottle or tube of sunscreen each day or 6 bottles for the 6 day vacation.

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If I am going on vacation to a sunny place does it make sense to get a “base” tan before I go?

No! Although you might think that you are decreasing your chances of getting a sun burn, in fact you are just increasing the total amount of sun damage to your skin. Use of tanning beds has a proven association with the development of melanoma.

What are self-tanners?

A variety of products are available. They work by staining the superficial layer of skin cells. Because this layer is lost on a continual basis through microscopic peeling and flaking, the effect of these sunless self-tanners is temporary. Keep in mind that the darkening agent will not give you any significant sun protection, you must still use a sunscreen. One of the best and easiest to use is Neutrogena Summer Glow – this is a daily moisturizer, broad-spectrum sunscreen and gives the skin a slightly darker tone after about one week of application. There are several options if you want to go lighter or darker.

What about Vitamin D, if I follow these guidelines am I likely to become vitamin D deficient?

A few minutes of sun exposure on a summer day can generate huge quantities of vitamin D in a person's body. Recent work, however, indicates that vitamin D has a lot of health-promoting functions, including cancer prevention. The Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academies in Washington, D.C., currently recommends that people from infancy through age 50 get 200 international units (IU) of vitamin D per day, that those ages 51 through 70 receive 400 IU daily, and that anyone over 70 get a net of 600 IU from sun, food, and supplements. Most supplements contain the nutrient, but most use an old form — D-2 — that is far less potent than the more desirable D-3. Multivitamins typically contain only small amounts of D-2 and include vitamin A, which offsets many of D's benefits. Although some experts have advocated “sensible” outdoor activity to boost sun exposure and vitamin D, since vitamin D is readily available orally and since skin cancers are epidemic, dermatologists recommend that people get much of their vitamin D intake from supplements and recommend that they boost daily vitamin D intakes to around 1,000 IU per day. A multivitamin is often not sufficient. Take a multivitamin and a vitamin D pill everyday, especially in the winter!

Vitamin D For Kids: The American Academy of Pediatrics states: “To prevent rickets and vitamin D deficiency in healthy infants and children and acknowledging that adequate sunlight exposure is difficult to determine, we reaffirm the adequate intake of 200 IU per day of vitamin D by the National Academy of Sciences and recommend a supplement of 200 IU per day for the following: 1. All breastfed infants unless they are weaned to at least 500 mL per day of vitamin D-fortified formula or milk. 2. All nonbreastfed infants who are ingesting less than 500 mL per day of vitamin D-fortified formula or milk. 3. Children and adolescents who do not get regular sunlight exposure, do not ingest at least 500 mL per day of vitamin D-fortified milk, or do not take a daily multivitamin supplement containing at least 200 IU of vitamin D.” So apply sunscreen to your kids and prevent them from burning their skin – they will thank you later!

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