

Save the Skin  
Your Child  
is In!



...Help Prevent  
Skin Cancer

# How can I protect my child from the sun's harmful UV rays?



## Follow these simple steps to sensible sun protection:

- 1 Keep infants out of the sun for the first 6 months of life.
- 2 Limit the amount of time your child spends in the sun.
- 3 Schedule outside activities for early morning or late afternoon. Avoid the hours of 10 am to 4 pm when the sun's UV rays are strongest and most harmful.
- 4 Keep your children in the shade. Use a tree for natural shade or make your own shade with an umbrella or a tent. Carriages and strollers with hoods and canopies provide shade for babies and toddlers.
- 5 Dress your children to minimize exposure to the sun's rays. Choose...
  - ...clothes that are made from tightly woven fabrics, such as unbleached cotton
  - ...wide-brimmed hats that shade your child's face, scalp, neck, and ears (not baseball caps!)
  - ...sunscreen that has a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher and
  - ...sunglasses (rated to block close to 100% of the sun's UV-A and UV-B rays) to protect your child's eyes and skin around the eyes.
- 6 Cover as much skin as possible with long-sleeved shirts and long shorts.

## **Be especially careful to protect your child from the sun:**

- On cloudy or hazy days. Clouds do not block most UV rays and you may not be aware of the potential for sunburn.
- Around surfaces that can reflect the sun's damaging rays onto the skin such as sand, water, cement and snow.
- In areas with a high altitude or tropical climate where the sun's UV rays are stronger.

*And set a good example for your children by following these steps yourself!!*

## **Be aware of:**

- Your child's medications. Certain prescriptions and over-the-counter medications can cause the skin to be more sensitive to the sun.
- Changes in your child's skin. Watch for any new raised growths, itchy patches, non-healing sores, or changes in moles and show them to your child's pediatrician.

# When you are not there to watch...

With more parents working outside the home, children spend a lot of daylight hours in activities away from home such as schools, day care centers, camps, and sports. Send them off with their sunscreen, hats, and sunglasses in their backpacks or beach bags. Talk to your children's schools and camps about their policies to protect kids from the sun and how they can make sure your child is protected. And make sure older children know how to protect themselves from the sun when you are not around.





## Sunscreen Tips

For the best protection, use sunscreen whenever your children are outdoors.

- Choose a sunscreen that offers both **UVA** and **UVB** protection
- Put sunscreen on **30 minutes** before going outside
- Rub a generous amount of sunscreen on all uncovered skin (except the eyes) and even on areas that will be covered by light clothing, which does not filter out all **UV** rays
- Use a sunscreen stick or lip balm on sensitive areas like the lips, nose, ears, hands and feet
- Choose a water-resistant or waterproof sunscreen if your child is playing in the water
- Sunscreen should be re-applied every two hours
- Towel-dry your child before re-applying sunscreen if your child is sweaty or has been swimming

## Did you know?

Most of us love sunny days, no matter what time of the year. The sun cheers us with its bright light and warmth.

But the sun also sends out harmful ultraviolet rays (**UV-A** and **UV-B**), which we cannot see. Long-term, unprotected exposure to these **UV** rays causes up to **90%** of all skin cancers. In fact, skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the **United States**.

More than **1 MILLION** new cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed in the **United States** this year. Most of a person's lifetime skin damage, which increases the risk for developing skin cancer, occurs before the age of **18**. Remember that sunburned or tanned skin is damaged skin. Even if a child's sunburn or tan fades, the damage caused by that tan or burn does not. The damage keeps adding up with each sunburn or tan and may one day result in skin cancer. No matter how hard adults work at protecting their skin, the sun damage they received as children cannot be undone.

**But there is also good news.** Skin cancer is one of the most preventable forms of cancer. **You can save the skin your child is in** by protecting your children every time they go out into the sun all year 'round.

# To help prevent most common chronic diseases:

## **Eat . . . Vegetables and Fruits**

- Try to eat at least 5 servings every day
- Choose vegetables and fruits at every meal and for snacks

## **Use . . . Low Fat Dairy Products**

- Eating dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt, pudding) low in fat reduces your risk of heart disease and obesity

## **Breastfeed . . . Your Baby**

- Breastfeeding is best for your baby up to age one.

## **Move . . . Every Day**

- Be active at least 30 minutes on most days
- Walking is a great choice—three 10-minute walks are as good for you as one 30-minute walk

## **Maintain . . . A Healthy Weight**

- If you are overweight, even a small weight loss can improve your health

## **Refuse . . . To Smoke**

- If you smoke, seek help to stop smoking now
- When you stop, your body begins to repair itself immediately
- Also, when you stop smoking your family and friends will not be affected by your second hand smoke

## **Know . . . Your Family History**

- Your family history can affect your risk for certain diseases
- Talk to your doctor about your family medical history



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