



Protect the Skin You're In!

Getting too much sun is bad because of ultraviolet radiation, 90% of which comes in the form of Ultraviolet A (UVA) rays that are not absorbed by the ozone layer and penetrate deep into our skin. Ultraviolet B (UVB) rays make up the rest. UVB rays are partially absorbed by the ozone layer, which makes preserving the ozone layer crucial to our health. And because UVB rays don't penetrate our skin as deeply, they can cause those lobster-red sunburns. Both types of UV rays are thought to cause skin cancer.

Do All Sunscreens Protect Your Skin from Ultraviolet Radiation?

While most sunscreens block out at least some UVB radiation, many don't screen UVA rays at all, making their use risky.

Below are recommended practices for preventing skin cancer and sunburns:

- If possible, reduce sun exposure from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., when UV rays are strongest.
- Wear a wide brimmed hat (at least 4" brim) that produces a shadow that covers the head, face and neck.
- Wear tightly woven, loose-fitting clothing that covers as much of the body as possible, weather permitting.
- When feasible, stay in the shade.
- Wear sunglasses that provide 99 - 100% UVA and UVB (broad spectrum) protection. Prescription glasses can have a UV-protective coating applied to the lens.
- Liberally apply sunscreen to exposed skin 15 minutes before going outdoors. The sunscreen container should specify a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher and should state it provides broad-spectrum (UVA and UVB) protection. Depending on outdoor conditions, sunscreen should be reapplied at least every two hours.
- Individuals with sensitive skin may want to test a new sunscreen on a small portion of skin to see if any negative reactions occur within 24 hours.
- Use lip balm with SPF of 30 or higher.
- Avoid tanning salons, booths and sunlamps.

