

Simple Steps to Safer Skin

According to the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention's, skin cancer outnumbers all other cancers, with over one million new cases each year. Use this fact sheet as a guide to safer skin this summer.

Sunscreen Safety:

- Buy sunscreen with zinc, titanium oxide, avobenzone, or mexoryl SX, they protect us from UVA and remain on the skin without penetrating into the body.
- Ingredients to avoid are oxybenzone, a synthetic estrogen, because it's a hormone disruptor and Vitamin A, a retinol and retinyl palmitate, because it may be photocarcinogenic indicating instability in sunlight.
- Studies show that people who use a sunscreen product with an SPF higher than 50 are exposed to as much or more UV rays as those who use lower SPF because they don't reapply sunscreen as often as they should and spend more time in the direct sun. (EWG.org)
- American Cancer Society recommends at least an SPF rating of 15 and the American Academy of Dermatology suggests using an SPF 30, but your SPF number should not exceed 50 because higher SPF products may be linked to tissue damage and hormone disruption.
- Nearly 90% of sunscreens fit the weak FDA regulations for the "broad-spectrum label while still containing extremely weak UVA protection (EWG.org)
- In 2012 over 1,800 sunscreen products were tested by the Environmental Working Group; they recommended only 1 in 4 products. (EWG.org)

TAKE ACTION

- Sunscreen should be applied 30 minutes prior to sun exposure, and reapplied generously every 2 hours or directly after swimming or towel drying. The proper amount of sunscreen is 1 ounce or a shot glass full.
- Use creams and lotions and avoid sprays and powders that can impact your respiratory system.
- Avoid sun burning, intentional tanning, and using tanning beds.
- Wear sun protective clothing, wide brimmed hats, and sunglasses when exposed to sunlight. Seek shade and limit sun exposure during the hottest part of the day, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.
- Use extra caution near water, snow, and sand.
- Tanning beds trigger melanin growth in your skin and the UV rays are 15 times stronger than the sun; self tanning products contain dihydroxyacetone which has not been tested for safety or approved by the FDA.
- If bug spray and sunscreen is needed, rotate the hours in which they are applied to reduce the amount of pesticides absorbed in your skin.
- Do not apply sunscreen to children under 6 months old; instead avoid sun exposure and use protective clothing (FDA.gov)
- Consider making a donation to your favorite non-profit, like Women for a Healthy Environment!

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For Kids Only:

- Of the 180 products tested in 2012, 63% of kid's sunscreens contained UVA blocking minerals, versus 40% of other sunscreens (EWG.org)
- Avoid sunscreens containing DEET, especially on hands and face due to ingestion risks (FDA.gov)

Sources:
<http://breakingnews.ewg.org/2012/sunscreen/sunscreens-exposed/executive-summary/>
<http://img2.timeinc.net/health/images/gallery/living/beach-umbrella-sun-400x400.jpg>
<http://www.prevention.com/sunscreen/index.shtml>
<http://www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm309136.htm>