

# PASS THE SUNSCREEN: KEEPING KIDS SUN SAFE THIS SUMMER

Childhood sun exposure is even more important than adult sun exposure in contributing to the development of skin cancer later in life. This fact sheet provides information and tips on how to protect your child's skin (and your own!) this summer.

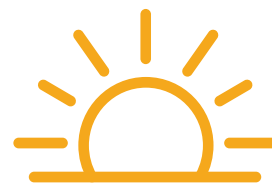
## WHO SHOULD WEAR SUNSCREEN?

Babies under six months old should not wear sunscreen or be exposed to direct sun because their skin is very delicate and sensitive. The best thing to do is keep babies under six months old in the shade, protected from the sun. Sunburns in babies can be medical emergencies — if your baby gets a sunburn, contact your paediatrician. Beyond six months, applying sunscreen and wearing protective clothing (long sleeves and pants) is recommended for infants, toddlers, and children as well as teenagers if they're going to be outside in the sun.

## WHAT IS SPF?

Sun Protection Factor (SPF) represents the length of time that sunscreen-protected skin can be exposed to UVB rays before developing redness and burns compared to unprotected skin.

## SUNSCREEN 101



### HOW DOES SUNSCREEN WORK?

Sunscreens work by absorbing, reflecting, or scattering UV radiation (UVA and UVB) from the sun. Even when it is cloudy, UV rays are there and can pass through the clouds. Sunscreens come in a variety of forms, including creams, lotions, gels, sticks and spray.

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### HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT SUNSCREEN?

When picking a sunscreen, the higher the SPF, the better the protection. Though the SPF numbers may double, it's important to note that it doesn't mean the protection doubles. In general, SPF 30 is a good all-purpose sunscreen for an active day outside. When deciding on which sunscreen to pick, remember that broad spectrum protects against UVA and UVB rays and that water-resistant means that the product will stay on better when in the water. Pick the sunscreen that feels best for you and that you find easy to apply.

## HOW MUCH SUNSCREEN SHOULD BE APPLIED?

Most people don't apply enough sunscreen to protect themselves. Adults need about 2 to 3 tablespoons of sunscreen to properly cover their body and about a teaspoon for their face and neck. The amount needed for kids will vary depending on the size of the child, but don't worry about applying too much sunscreen — children should have a generous amount of sunscreen applied 20 minutes before going into the sun, and it should be reapplied every two hours when outdoors for an extended time. If possible, try to apply sunscreen to dry skin for best absorption.

## HOW TO PROPERLY APPLY SUNSCREEN?

Sunscreen should be your first layer of protection, this means you should apply it before other products like makeup or insect repellent. Apply sunscreen on any area of your skin that clothing does not cover, this includes ears, chin, neck, bald spots, the tops of your feet and the backs of your hands. If you are using a sunscreen that comes in a spray or pump bottle, spray or pump the sunscreen on your hands and then apply to your face to avoid getting sunscreen in your eyes or mouth. Try looking for a lip balm that also has SPF to protect your lips. If you forget to put sunscreen on before you go outside, apply it when you do remember — it is never too late.

## DO SUNSCREENS EXPIRE?

Yes. Sunscreens contain chemicals and should not be used after the expiry date as they may not work as well. Sunscreens can also be affected by extreme changes in temperature, so best to buy a new sunscreen if yours has been overheated or frozen.

## HOW OFTEN SHOULD I REAPPLY SUNSCREEN?

Sunscreen should be reapplied at least every 2 hours. Reapply sunscreen after sweating, swimming or toweling off. Water-resistant sunscreens do help if you are in water, but only works for about 40 to 80 minutes. It is important to remember, the higher the SPF does not mean that you can wait longer to reapply.



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Sources:

<http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-type/skin-melanoma/statistics/?region=on>

<https://www.cancer.ca/en/prevention-and-screening/reduce-cancer-risk/make-healthy-choices/be-sun-safe/sunscreen-101-quick-tips-on-using-sunscreen-products/?region=on>

<https://dermatology.ca/public-patients/sun-protection/sunscreen-faq/>