

# Fun and the Sun: Skin Protection Guide for Families



## Cover Up

Wear clothing that covers your skin. Such as:

- Long sleeve shirts.
- Long pants.
- Hats. Wide-brimmed hats are best. They protect the neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose, and scalp.
- Sunglasses that block 99 - 100% of UVA and UVB rays.

## Seek Shade

Reduce UV radiation by taking shelter under a tree, umbrella, or another shaded spot, especially when the radiation from the sun is most intense. The intensity of the sun's rays vary by:

- Time of day. The sun's rays are the most intense between 10 am and 4pm.
- Time of the year.
- Elevation (UV intensity increases with altitude).
- Reflection off surfaces (such as water or snow).
- Cloud cover.

## Use Good Sunscreen and Apply Often

Use a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 30.

- Apply sunscreen liberally, 20-30 minutes before going outside.
- **Reapply sunscreen at least every 2 hours.** There is no such thing as "waterproof" sunscreen. Sunscreen may be water resistant (up to 40 minutes) or very water resistant (up to 80 minutes). However, the sunscreen should still be reapplied after drying your skin.
- Don't forget to apply sunscreen to lips, ears, feet, hands, bald spots, and the back of your neck.

## Check the UV Forecast

The UV gives the expected UV radiation reaching Earth's surface on a scale of 1 to 10+. The higher the number, the greater the exposure to UV radiation and the greater the need to protect your skin.

The UV forecast can be found online at <https://weather.com>

Index Number	Exposure Level	Minutes to Skin Damage
0-2	Minimal	>60
3-4	Low	30-40
5-6	Moderate	20-30
7-9	High	10-20



## What's the Difference Between Chemical and Mineral Sunscreens?<sup>1</sup>

Mineral, chemical, or hybrid sunscreens form a protective layer on the skin to absorb the sun's UV rays. Mineral sunscreen may also deflect the sun's UV rays off the skin.

The biggest difference between chemical and mineral sunscreens is the ingredients they contain. To see what type of sunscreen you have, look for the *Active Ingredients* on your sunscreen bottle.

### Mineral Sunscreen (also called a physical sunscreen)

If the active ingredients in your sunscreen are titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, or both then you have a mineral sunscreen. Dermatologists recommend mineral sunscreens for people with sensitive skin.

### Chemical Sunscreen

If your sunscreen doesn't contain titanium dioxide or zinc oxide, you have a chemical sunscreen.

### Hybrid sunscreen

These sunscreens contain one or more active ingredients found in chemical and physical sunscreens.

## What is the Best Sunscreen to Use?

Mineral, chemical, or hybrid sunscreens can effectively protect you from the sun if you select one that offers all the following:

- SPF 30 or higher
- Broad-spectrum protection (blocks UVA and UVB rays)
- Water resistance

Download *SunSafe in the Middle School Years* resources: <https://cancer.dartmouth.edu/cancer-community/resources>

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<sup>1</sup> Guidance taken from American Academy of Dermatology (2024). <https://www.aad.org/media/stats-sunscreen>