

Preventing Sunburn

What is sunburn?

Sunburn occurs when skin is damaged by ultraviolet radiation from the sun.

Why should I protect my child from sunburn?

It's important to protect your child from sunburn because the sun's rays are harmful. Sunburn can age the skin. This can cause wrinkles, blotches, drying and leathery skin. It can also cause skin cancer. Up to 90% of all skin cancer is from too much exposure to sun.

What tips should I follow?

To protect your child, follow these tips:

- Give your child additional protection by keeping him or her covered with a wide brim hat, long sleeves or pants when possible.
- Have your child stay out of the sun during midday hours. The sun's rays are the strongest between 10am and 3pm.
- Use a sunscreen that has an SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of at least 15 and has both UVA and UVB coverage.
- Look for sunscreens that have titanium dioxide, zinc dioxide and/or Parsol 1789 (Avobenzone) as their active ingredients.
- Apply sunscreen lotion at least 15 minutes before your child goes outside. Be sure to apply on all exposed areas of skin including the face, back of the neck, ears, nose and feet. Avoid contact with the eyes and eyelids.
- Reapply the sunscreen every 2 to 4 hours. Reapply more often if your child is swimming or sweating.
- Use at least one ounce (about the size of a half-dollar) of sunscreen. Using less than this amount can reduce the sunscreen's protection.
- Teenagers with acne can choose a sunscreen that is oil-free and non-comedogenic (does not produce blemishes or pimples).
- Check the expiration date of the bottle of sunscreen you are using. Do not use the lotion if it is past the expiration date.
- Keep the sunscreen out of the sun and heat. Sun and heat can break down the chemicals in the lotion.
- Be aware of surfaces that can reflect sunlight and cause sunburn: sand, water, cement and snow. Even on cloudy or hazy days, 80% of the sun's radiation can still burn your child.

Tips (continued)

- Infants under 6 months of age should not use sunscreen. They should be kept out of the sun entirely.
- Set an example for your child by using sunscreen and staying covered when out in the sun.
- Keep sunscreen out of reach of young children.

What should I do if my child gets sunburn?

If your child's skin gets burned, do the following:

- Give your child water or juice to replace body fluids your child has lost.
- Give acetaminophen if your child feels discomfort or has a temperature over 101°F.
- Dab a light moisturizing lotion on the burned area. Do not put rubbing alcohol on the skin.
- Your child may take a bath in clear water that is cool to the touch.
- Keep your child out of the sun until the sunburn heals.
- If your child has severe pain, blistered skin, extreme tiredness or a temperature over 101°F, call your child's doctor.
- If your child is under one year old, sunburn is a medical emergency. **Call your child's doctor immediately.**

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to provide you with additional information about your child's care. Diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up should be provided by your health care professional.