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Sun Safety
Not all Sun Protection Products are Created Equal!

Fast Facts

- Most skin cancers are influenced by excessive skin exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays.
- UV rays – such as those emitted by the sun – can actually affect skin cells' DNA.
    - Damage is cumulative – exposure to high intensity rays for long periods of time can overcome the body's ability to repair the skin damage.
    - Sun's UV rays cause skin cells to mutate —> malignant tumors form —> skin cancer.
- Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer, with 5.4 million new diagnoses in the US annually.
- This single disease contributes almost $5 billion to American healthcare expenses each year.
- Most cases of skin cancer occur in older adults ≥65 years, however…

The right practices early on can help lower your risk of developing skin cancer later in life!

Knowledge Check!

Q: TRUE OR FALSE: Sun protection is important only in the summer.
A: FALSE! Protection from UV rays is important all year. UV rays can reach you on cloudy and cool days, and they reflect off of surfaces like water, cement, sand, and snow.

Q: What time are UV rays strongest?
A: In the US, UV rays tend to be strongest from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Limit time in the sun during this time frame!

Protect yourself with…

- ***Shade:*** Avoid direct sun contact by seeking shade from umbrellas, trees, or shelters.
- **Clothing:** Aim for long garments, tightly woven fabrics, darker colors, and dry materials.
- **Hats & Headwear:** Brimmed hats can prevent the face's sensitive skin.
- **Sunglasses:** Protective eyewear will not only protect the sensitive skin around the eyes, but can also reduce the risk of cataracts.
- **Sunscreen / Sunblock:** The absolute best form of sun protection in addition to these other measures is a broad-spectrum high-SPF Sunscreen!

Sunscreen	Sunblock
Chemical defense – absorbs UV light	*Physical defense* — reflects UV light
Application requires rubbing in to penetrate skin	Simple application to skin's exterior as physical barrier
Ingredients include organic chemical compounds	Ingredients include minerals
Depending on formulation, may be designed to prevent UVA rays (that promote skin damage, wrinkles and cancer) and/or UVB rays (that cause sunburn)	

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Choosing & Using the Right Sun Protetion Product

- Choose the one you'll wear! Personal skin conditions may make one product more appealing than others. For example, individuals with sensitive skin may prefer a sensitive sunblock because sunscreen's chemical ingredients may cause a reaction.

- ***SPF:*** Sun Protection Factor assigns a number for how well the sunscreen/block prevents UV rays. Higher numbers indicate more protection. Aim for a product with SPF ≥15. Fair individuals may even seek SPF ≥30.
    - DID YOU KNOW sun protectants < SPF-15 are required to have a warning stating that the product has only been shown to prevent sunburn, and not reduce the risk of skin cancer or skin aging?

- ***Broad Spectrum:*** indicates the sun protectant prevents both UVA and UVB rays. Recommended!

- ***Water Resistant:*** indicates the sun protectant are resistant for 40 or 80 minutes. Recommended! Note, no sun protectants are waterproof and reapplication is needed!

- ***Application:*** Apply an even coat to all exposed skin 15 minutes before going outside and per product directions.

- ***Reapplication:*** Reapply as directed by product instructions. Generally, no later than 2 hours after first application, and after swimming, sweating, or toweling off.