

How to Catch Summer Rays Without the Burn



How do you protect your kids from the harsh UV rays this summer?

As the long, hot summer days come and go, it is extremely important to use proper sunscreen so the day does not leave you with an unwanted burn. We have compiled sunscreen tips and reminders with the help of Rebecca Baxt, M.D., Board Certified Dermatologist with Zwivel.com, to keep you and the whole family covered next time you are headed out for some summer fun!

Where should I apply? Places such as your face and shoulders might be easier to remember when you are applying sunscreen. What about the not so obvious? The tops of your feet and ears, as well as the back of your neck are commonly forgotten. These are some of the only places flat in the sun by nature or posture, making these areas extremely susceptible to sun exposure.

What is the best SPF?

Always look for a sunblock with an SPF (not as commonly known as Sun Protection Factor) of 30 or above if you are going to be outdoors and in the sun. If you are headed to work, school, or somewhere indoors, an SPF of 15 will likely do the trick.

Contrary to popular belief, not all sunscreen is the same above SPF 30. Though the biggest difference is from 15 to 30, the protection level does in fact increase with the numbers. What is important to remember is that the need for a higher SPF is all based on skin type. Talk to your dermatologist or healthcare provider if you are unsure what is best for you or your child.

“It really means that if you have an SPF of 15 that it is going to take 15 times longer for you to burn had you not used the sunblock. You can still burn. It is not going to protect you forever, but it will give you an amount of time before you burn,” says Dr. Baxt.

How often should I reapply?

Sunscreen protects you from the sun, but not forever. Therefore, reapplying it is just as important as putting it on in the first place. Dr. Baxt recommends reapplying every hour or two hours, depending on skin type, SPF of the sunblock, and what you are doing. If you are in the water or sweating, Dr. Baxt recommends one hour. If you are not particularly sweaty, she says two hours is okay. That being said, the more often you reapply, the less likely you are to burn.

Is this still the case if my sunscreen says it is water resistant?

Yes! You still need to reapply every one to two hours.

“They used to say waterproof, but we all know there is no such thing as waterproof sunscreen,” says Dr. Baxt. “Now it just says water resistant which basically means, if you are in the water, you have to apply every hour.”

Spray or lotion?

Dermatologists have a preference for lotion sunscreen over spray sunscreen, according to Dr. Baxt. Whether it is the wind blowing it away or not fully rubbed in, more often than not, spray sunscreen is not adequately applied. If you can, use lotion sunscreen and you will be much better off for it.