



Protect your skin from the sun

The basics

Over time, taking in the sun without any protection can lead to problems — from dry skin and wrinkles to skin cancer. Use these tips to enjoy your time in the sun, safely.

Cover up. Clothing and hats are good basic protection from the sun.

The sun's rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. During these hours, try to limit your time in the sun.

Sunscreen is an excellent protector.

But you must put it on correctly. Work from your face down to your feet. Don't forget your ears and neck, or to let someone else get your back and shoulders. Also, if you go swimming, put more on every 1 to 2 hours.

Sunscreen and care recommendations

Skin type	Recommended protection
Sun sensitive skin (certain skin conditions and allergies; sensitivity because of medication)	Generally, you shouldn't be in the sun. But if you have to be, protect yourself. Wear a lot of clothes. Use a broad-spectrum, high-SPF (sun protection factor) sunscreen.
White, pale, burns easily	Use SPF 15 or higher for everyday care. Use SPF 30 or higher for the beach or for long hours in the sun.
White, able to tan	Use SPF 15 or higher.
Asian, Hispanic, Indian and fair African-Americans	
Darker-skinned African-Americans	Your skin gives you good natural protection from the sun. But for long hours in the sun, use SPF 15 or higher.

Common skin cancers — what to look for

Basal cell carcinomas — 80 percent of all skin cancers

- Most easily treated
- Usually pearly, slow-growing, raised areas that may crust and bleed
- Occur mostly on the face, neck and hands

Squamous cell carcinomas — 16 percent of all skin cancers

- Easily treated if found early
- Show as red or pink, scaly bumps on the face, hands and ears

Malignant melanomas — 4 percent of all skin cancers

- Most serious skin cancer; can be fatal, but treatable if found early
- Begins as dark brown or flat black spot; may later change in shape or color
- May grow from a mole

Source: Aetna IntelliHealth. Available at www.intelihealth.com. Accessed January 24, 2011.

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