

Protecting Your Child from the Sun

Babies under 6 months:

Avoiding sun exposure and dressing infants in lightweight long pants and long-sleeved shirts and brimmed hats are still the top recommendations from the AAP to prevent sunburn. However when adequate clothing and shade are not available, parents can apply a minimal amount of sunscreen to small areas, such as the infant's face and the back of the hands.

Children 1 year and all family members:

Choose sunscreen that is made for children, preferably waterproof. Before covering your child completely, test the sunscreen on your child's back for a reaction. Apply carefully around eyes, avoiding eyelids. If a rash develops, talk to your pediatrician. For better protection select clothes made of tightly woven fabrics. When using a cap with a bill, make sure the bill is facing forward to shield your child's face. Sunglasses with UV protection also are a good idea for protecting your child's eyes. If your child gets a sunburn that results in blistering, pain and fever, contact your pediatrician.

Here are some additional sun safety tips that apply to all members of your family:

- The sun's rays are the strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Try to keep out of the sun during these hours
- The sun's damaging UV rays can bounce back from sand, snow or concrete; so be particularly careful in these areas.
- Most of the sun's rays can come through the clouds on an overcast day; so use sun protection even on cloudy days.
- When choosing a sunscreen, look for the words "broad-spectrum" on the label
- Choose a water resistant or waterproof sunscreen. Sunscreens that are "waterproof" should be reapplied every two hours, especially if your child is playing in the water.
- Zinc Oxide, a very effective sunblock, can be used as extra protection on the nose, cheeks, tops of the ears and on the shoulders.
- Use a SPF of at least 15.
- Rub sunscreen in well, making sure to cover all exposed areas, especially your child's face, nose, ears, feet and hands, and even the backs of the knees.
- Put on sunscreen 30 minutes before going outdoors
- Keep your child completely out of the sun until the sunburn is totally healed.
- Sunscreens should be used for sun protection and not as a reason to stay in the sun longer

